THE

BAPTIST REPORTER.

NEW SERIES.—VOL. I. 1864.

"ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM.

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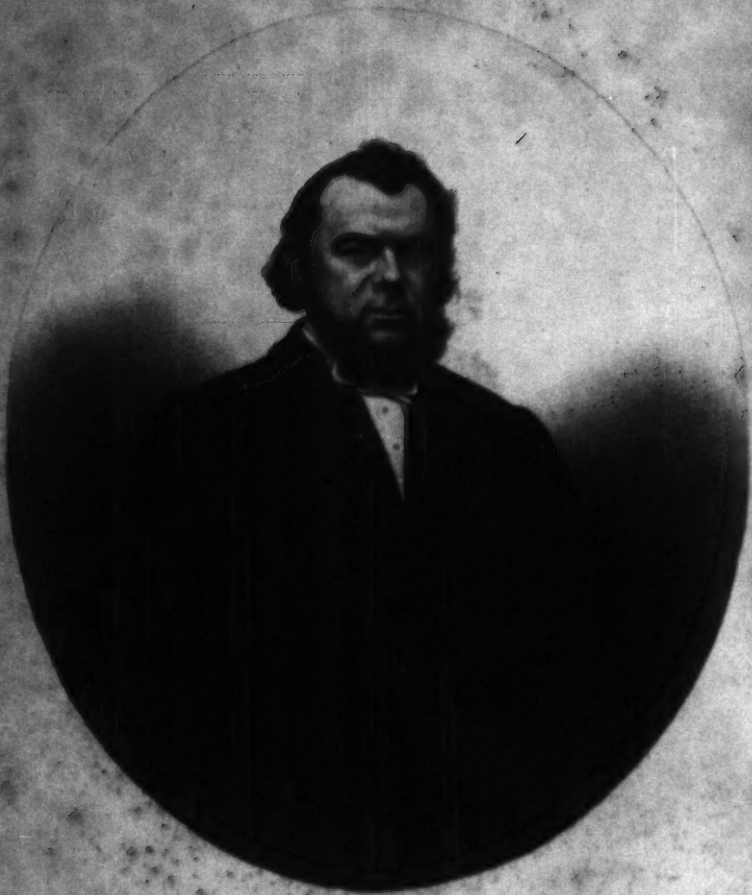

Yours truly
H. J. Brown

BAPTIST REPORTER.

PREFACE.

A PREFACE to a Book is always the last thing that is written: it is presumed, however, to be the first thing that is read. A Preface to a Periodical is not only the last thing written, but of necessity also the last read. In the latter case, therefore, it seems at least superfluous, for the reader knows all that the writer can tell him, and can generally anticipate all that he has to say. Still, it has this advantage, that it enables an Editor to place himself for a few moments in direct personal communication with his readers, and to speak for once in his own name, instead of under the cover of the everlasting "WE."

Anyhow, the Editor of THE BAPTIST REPORTER cannot allow his first volume to close without expressing his thankfulness to the many friends who have aided him in his new undertaking. He entered upon it a year since with "fear and trembling,"—fear, lest he should fail altogether to attain to his ideal of what such a periodical ought to be; trembling, lest in encountering this additional anxiety, he might be adding too heavily to the burden of an already sufficiently laborious life. In regard to the latter anxiety, he can only say, that his toil, if arduous, has been pleasant, and he has the satisfaction of believing that it has been also useful: in regard to the former, he is encouraged by the assurances of many readers, whose estimate of the success of his efforts has been most gratifying and most kind. To all who have aided in promoting the circulation of THE REPORTER,—to all who have spoken well of it to their friends,—especially to those who have contributed to its pages, and have so made it what it is, the Editor offers, thus publicly and formally, his sincerest thanks.

The only thing that the Editor has to ask, respectfully and earnestly, of those whom he hopes he may consider the friends of THE REPORTER, is, that they will do what may be in their power to increase its circulation—and so its usefulness—during the coming year.

42, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON,
December 1st, 1864.

*** The Editor has much pleasure in stating, that, in the twelve numbers for this year, will be found contributions from the Revs. C. BAILHACHE, of Islington; S. COX, of Nottingham; H. CRASSWELLER, B.A., of Derby; E. DENNETT, of Lewisham; J. DREW, of Halifax; B. EVANS, D.D., of Scarboro'; T. E. FULLER, of Luton; J. J. GOADBY, of Leicester; J. H. GORDON, of Astley Bridge; S. G. GREEN, B.A., of Rawdon College; A. MACLAREN, B.A., of Manchester; J. H. MILLARD, B.A., of Huntingdon; A. MURSELL, of Manchester; J. MURSELL, of Kettering; W. ROBINSON, of Cambridge; C. SHORT, M.A., of Swansea; J. STENT, of Notting Hill; T. R. STEVENSON, of Luton; C. STOVEL, of London; W. H. TEPLEY, of Coleford; G. B. THOMAS, of St. Neot's; W. UNDERWOOD, of Chilwell College; W. WALTERS, of Newcastle-on-Tyne; C. WILLIAMS, of Southampton; and EDWARD MIALL, Esq., of London. The Secretaries of the Baptist Missionary Society, the General Baptist Missionary Society, the Baptist Irish Society, and the Baptist Building Fund, have also furnished intelligence about their respective Societies.

THE

BAPTIST REPORTER.

JANUARY, 1864.

THE POSITION AND CAPABILITIES OF THE BAPTIST DENOMINATION.

In starting a New Series of *The Baptist Reporter*, the first number may be worthily occupied with a candid review of our position and capabilities as a denomination. We shall endeavour, on the one hand, to avoid falling into a strain of self-glorification; and on the other, to abstain from the snarling cynical spirit which sees nothing but faults and failures. This method may not be so interesting to strong partizans; it may fail to win the sympathy of grumblers. Our "position" may not be satisfactory; but we will not exaggerate nor hide its defects. Our "capabilities" ought to inspire hope and effort, and we will do our best to proclaim the *latent unused powers*, which, like veins of gold, enrich a denomination unconscious of its wealth.

Our distinctive attitude, in reference to other sections of the Christian church, is such as ought to inspire self-respect and a sense of responsibility. We solemnly assert, with all the emphasis of deep conviction, that there can be no profession of Christianity—no entrance into the kingdom of God—apart from intelligent and voluntary faith. That which lies at the bottom of our views as Baptists, is,—"That with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." To hold and to preach this principle consistently is surely no trifling or contemptible position for a denomination to maintain. To shew its application to every ordinance, to baptism, to the Lord's Supper, to the fellowship of true believers, is the "burden" of our prophecy in an age when theories which *tend* to neutralize the principle are held by nearly every other section of the church. We say *tend* to neutralize it, because we wish to live in charity with Pædobaptists; but till they unanimously tell us what infant baptism *means*—what the rite signifies as an institution of the church—we cannot help feeling a logical inconsistency between their preaching of the Gospel and the practice of infant baptism. We have hitherto thought that the importance of this doctrine has entailed upon us the responsibility of maintaining as a body our separate existence, and till it can be shewn either that we have exaggerated the value of the principle, or that we can amalgamate with other bodies without sacrificing it, we see no other course open to us.

In estimating the recognition we have obtained as a body, we have not only to count the two hundred thousand members of our churches, but to reckon the large number of Baptists who belong to Pædobaptist churches, together with the numbers who are "Baptists in principle," but who are not in communion with any church. Since the registration of births has passed into law, a large number of Pædobaptists—and the number, we understand, is on the increase—neglect the baptism of their children, not because they are indifferent to the question, but out of silent homage to our principle. It must be evident to any one who thoughtfully scans these facts, that we have obtained a wider hold upon the convictions of Christian men than mere statistics would indicate. Our progress in leavening the church-mind of the country is such as ought to teach us our responsibility, and to inspire the conviction that we have been witnesses for an important truth when we have taught that "intelligent voluntary faith professed by Baptism" is the law of Christ's church.

We have reached this position by very simple means. Our power has not sprung from an elaborate organization, like Wesleyanism; we have not used our pulpits, to any large extent, to preach our principles; nor have we anything that can be called a Baptist literature. Till lately we have never had many popular preachers to win for us the public attention. We have had, indeed, men of rare ability and piety in our ranks—men who have left the mark of their genius upon religious literature and theological controversy and missionary institutions; but they have appealed to limited audiences, and have been heard within a limited circle. *The force of truth* is the chief element which accounts for our progress. Now, indeed, our ministry occupies a more commanding attitude than at any previous period in our history. In London, and in the large provincial towns, we are represented by men who combine a certain rugged strength of mind with a degree of popular power which gains the ear of the people.

In this general statement of our position we have indicated our *capabilities*. Our Scripture position is strong; we are strong in Christian character, and by the discipline of our churches; strong in intelligence, and in the material means of a large extension. And yet a candid Independent friend said to us the other day, "You Baptists are going nowhere. You talk a great deal, but you do little." Though it be against the grain to admit it, there is a spice of truth in what was said. We are not using our strength; our great opportunity is not seized and made the most of. We certainly are not a *pushing* body. We are not building too many chapels; we are far from being fanatics in the work of education. *We* did not make much capital out of the Bicentenary year.

We will say frankly that the two things we most need to develope our resources and apply our strength, are,—*Greater public spirit and greater union.*

There can be no doubt that a minister's own church has the first and highest claim upon his time and labour. It ought to engross his warmest and deepest sympathies. But there is a danger of his becoming exclusive and indifferent to the *common* objects aimed at by the body to which he belongs. He may try to persuade himself that if he superintends the

societies connected with his own church, and manifests a becoming zeal for the Mission, he has fulfilled his duty to the denomination. And yet, if that be all which is due from men who occupy the front rank amongst us, what is to become of the various *general* interests of the body? We have no men appointed to be bishops, in the modern sense of that term, but there are influential men in London and elsewhere who ought to feel within them the spirit of the bishop, and look further than their own church and their own day, and care for the welfare of such an increasing body of people as we are. Not to speak of the Independents, we have often been struck at the contrast in this respect between our ministers and the clergy of the Established Church. Men who occupy responsible positions in the church are as hard-worked as our most indefatigable ministers; and yet, to see men, many of whom have long passed the prime of life, working with all their might for the interests of the church at home and abroad, and providing for generations yet to come, is a sight to move our hearts with shame when we remember our own coldheartedness, narrowness, and selfishness. If an objector attribute the zeal of the clergy to the *esprit de corps* of a great ecclesiastical corporation lusting for supremacy, he ought at the same time to insist that we should be no less zealous under the inspiration of purer and grander motives. But it is a cause for pity and tears, that, in the absence of a large and generous tone in our public men, every onward movement should be dismissed with a disparaging sneer, or left to die of neglect.

And this want of public spirit is the main hindrance to effective organization and union amongst us. No doubt there are minor hindrances. Morbid men can see no good in union. Real co-operation presupposes a mutual good understanding,—large and healthy sympathies with great common objects. But some men glory in isolation and crotchets, and in their case, to use a familiar illustration, every dog hunts his own hare. Others, again, think our internal divisions as a body will prevent the possibility of united action. As long as there are General and Particular Baptists, open and strict communionists, and mixed churches of Independents and Baptists, it is argued there can be no coherence amongst us, —no *massive* action of the whole body. We are not going to discuss any of these differences, nor to prophesy the triumph of any one of these sections. We may lament such intestine controversies, and admit that they *tend* to distract rather than unite us; but if there is one fact more patent to an observer than another, it is this: that Christian men in this day shew a marked tendency to respect each other's peculiar convictions, and yet to co-operate on common grounds of action. A very grand sign of the times this is, and we Baptists are increasingly yielding to the feeling. We are beginning to find out that it is the merest drivelling to expect we can all agree to the minutest particulars in our intellectual conclusions; and we are happily discovering, though it be slowly, that love is of infinitely more value than our individual opinions. We will mention one more alleged hindrance to union. It has often been said, with more candour than truth, that we are a *poor* body, and that, therefore, we could achieve little. This self-depreciation is very gratuitous. We are

poor, at least we seem poor, if we look at the number of new chapels we build, and at the sums we contribute to the principal societies. But these are imperfect grounds of judgment. The real question is, What could we do,—what hidden, unexplored wealth should we discover,—if we employed better means for developing the resources of our people? Our own conviction is, that we could easily *double* what we are now doing. The half of our capability is lying fallow.

A very hopeful sign for us is that everywhere, especially among those who have not grown old and despairing, there is an unmistakable longing for union. Travel into the remotest parts of England, or talk to men in London, and the same word is upon the lips of all—union. We are now felt to be so many *disjecta membra*, and the cry is for a living, organized body. The question has lately been opened, and talked of in the columns of *The Freeman;* but the country is waiting with eager hope for the day when our natural leaders, fired with a holy emulation of other bodies, shall speak the talismanic word which shall draw ministers and churches together. We want the ablest, and the wisest, and the best, to meet in congress, and talk over our debts (the Baptist Missionary Society would not then be in difficulties), and hindrances, and opportunities; to look at the financial systems of the churches; to consider what our literature is; and to handle with vigour our home and foreign mission questions, and the question of church extension. The programme would widen every year, and we should then wonder that we could so long have set system and order at defiance, and left the interests of the denomination to take their chance. If we wanted a new illustration of the fact that Christ is ever with his church, even when man is most negligent, we should find it in the history and progress of our own denomination; for surely nothing less than supernatural care could have preserved us from the consequences of our neglect and want of order. "*Non nobis,*" &c.

Our capabilities are great, but our achievements are small; and the reason is, that we are not a compact and welded mass of individual energies. Our opportunities are manifold and rich; the soil of public sentiment is ready to receive the seed of eternal life; and the Master of the Vineyard, looking at our supineness, says to us, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The times are full of hope, if we have the eyes to see what they promise, and hands to seize what they offer. No differences amongst us are of such magnitude as ought to keep us asunder. What we need is, not only to be one in spirit, but one in action. If any petty jealousies have kept any of us apart,—if we have allowed in any case the spirit of rivals to steal in where the genius of fellowship should have dwelt,—let us purify our hearts by prayer and penitence, and turn unto God for a new spirit. Better days are surely near at hand: a sense of brotherhood will supplant the feeling of isolation in which so many languish; the intercourse of ministers and churches will feed the fires of love, and piety, and zeal; the combination of a love of order with our ancient love of freedom will give stability and impulse to our progress; and we shall vindicate our claim to be in the front rank of those who carry the standard of God's truth.

"THE TASK OF THE LEAST."

Our greatest art-critic has told us that the great masters always make the least parts of their work tell upon their canvas. The little foreground groups—odd things apparently flung carelessly about—are not put there to fill up vacant places, but each one for a distinct clear purpose. The smallest and seemingly most useless things are laden with a beautiful task. Herein, he tells us, is the difference between true and poor work. The imperfect workman puts in so many objects with little or no relation to one another, but the true workman makes everything tell in producing one great effect from his picture. The waving fern gives help and grace to the stone bank out of which it springs—the rounded pebbles help the river in its flowing—the long undergrass weaves its green garland round the bare brown trunk, and leads, with its slender spires, to the group of pines that touch the sky.

The same writer takes to pieces a picture of Turner's, to show us how closely the law is followed by that most wonderful of all the painters.

The subject of the picture is a river of France. Let Mr. Ruskin describe it for us:—

"To get at it completely we must know something of the Loire. The district through which it here flows is, for the most part, a low place, yet not altogether at the level of the stream, but cut into deep banks of chalk or gravel, thirty or forty feet high, running for miles at about an equal height above the water. These banks are excavated by the peasantry, partly for houses, partly for cellars, so economising vineyard space above; and thus a kind of continuous village runs along the river side, composed half of caves, half of rude buildings, backed by the cliff, propped against it, therefore always leaning away from the river; mingled with overlappings of vineyard trellis from above, and little towers or summer-houses for outlook when the grapes are ripe, or for gossip over the garden wall.

"It is an autumnal evening, then, by this Loire side. The day has been hot, and the air is heavy and misty still; the sunlight warm, but dim; the brown vine-leaves motionless; all else quiet. Not a sail in sight on the river—its strong, noiseless current lengthening the stream of low sunlight.

"The motive of the picture, therefore, is the expression of rude but perfect peace, slightly mingled with an indolent languor and despondency; the peace between intervals of enforced labour; happy, but listless, and having little care or hope about the future; cutting its home out of this gravel bank, and letting the vine and the river twine and undermine as they will; careless to mend or build so long as the walls hold together, and the black fruit swells in the sunshine."

Now let us see how all the lines and touches bend to this one purpose. All the lines of the picture are vertical or horizontal, to express perfect rest. If curves are introduced, the thought of the beholder will flow with the lines either on land or water; but they are not to flow, but to be still. The upright wall on the left, at right angles with the road, reflecting the hot sun—the plain of water below, perfectly unruffled, even by a river wave driven up by a light summer breeze, are all full of rest and stillness.

But look again; on the right hand, between the road and the water, is a large flat stone, crowning the wall that overlooks the river. Now, put your hand on that large stone, and the adjacent wall and the river has gone! At least it is so utterly in the etching. The flat of the stone overhanging the water, has, by giving you the sharp ledge over which we are so accustomed to look at water, and by repeating its surface on the broad stone, actually made the river! On the top of this stone is fastened a large iron ring, meant to hold

a ship's cable, if any "galley with oars" ever comes down that peaceful river. Now put your finger on that ring, and the *river ceases to flow!* Its service there is to repeat the curve of the river, with its eddyings, so as to make us *feel*, without seeing, that it is sweeping round below.

Once again. All the lines of the picture—of the river bank and the roadside—meet in one point. At that point is an old church, so that back again from all these lines comes a Sabbath rest, diffusing itself over the whole picture.

Now, if such delicately balanced work and meaning as this be a characteristic of true art, it must belong still more to that which the artist seeks to copy—the greater work of God. So, indeed, it is; for to a yet more wonderful extent little things are laden with a task which each fulfils to the *utmost*. "Every atom is in energy, and all that energy is kind." Giving and taking is the law marked on everything that God has made. We sometimes speak of the strength of the old trunk bearing up the creeping parasite; but do you ever think what the creeper gives back to the old withered trunk of grace and beauty, now that its power is gone to give forth new shoots with its younger brethren of the forest? We have no intention now to follow out this law in nature—the little sketch of the picture may teach us that it is so, and how to look for it. Suffice it to say, that the *higher the form of life*, the more the service of little things is seen. Let us see where this sentence leads us.

We pass at once to another realm, to try and find the task which God has given to little actions, and, if the phrase offend no one, to little people. And by little people we mean those who think they are not able to take any task in this busy world, either from lack of strength, or means, or opportunity.

The task of little actions! But let us be sure we are right in thus naming them. We may say that the pebble is small, and the cliff that frowns over it is large; but can we thus talk of deeds? A short sentence, sharply uttered on the field of Waterloo, sent thousands of men to their last account; and Newton built his orrery from the falling of an apple! The mighty works of our Redeemer came from a word, a look, a touch. So we must be careful how we speak of little acts and things, and how we measure importance by bulk. It would be easy to show how, in all history and biography, little things have contained the elements of greater ones, and have been leading on to them. But we have now a plainer and simpler lesson to teach. This paper aims to show how, in our household and church life, we are too concerned to give meaning to our more set and formal actions, and be careless with all the rest. Our common words and actions in home and church life, are leading anywhere; while our prayers, exhortations, and speeches, are pointed for a solemn purpose! As to home life, listen to all the frettings, and murmurings, and complainings, that come out when no one but the children and servants are near! You all know the proverb—it is not worth while to print it here. What a change of tone if a stranger comes in! All the sweet and loving words are for the people outside, to keep up appearances. It is scarcely worth while, perhaps, to go into the kitchen, and see the servants worked out of life on the smallest possible pay, and to hear the quarrels over sixpences and old bones! Let us hope it would not come home to many. But oh, my brother and sister! all bland and courteous in the place of prayer, where do these little things lead? Let the children tell, as they grow up to carry to another generation your miserable parody on the name of mother or father. Where do they lead? Let the maid-of-all-work tell us, as she leaves her place declaring that if that's religion she won't have anything more to do with it.

But where might all these things lead,—these many simple words and actions? Why, where all life ought to lead—to God and heaven. If our lightest words all bore worthily their beautiful burden, they would be more

powerful than the most fervid appeals that ever startled an assembled multitude.

Our church life may not seem to offer such opportunity for putting to service little actions—but it does. Our communion can only be kept pure and loving, as it delights in the many nameless acts of service which we call Christian courtesy and kindness. A task is laid on each of us to serve our brethren. Our church communion must have a more natural and simple flow, instead of being a mass of isolated atoms. As matters stand, a church is scarcely the right name, for the four walls of the place of prayer only hold a company of seat-holders, bound by no mutual love, and no common service.

Did you ever hear the true interpretation of Mr. Spurgeon's Save-all? According to the prints, the popular preacher is in the act of stirring up the flickering remains of some poor lost creature, that nothing may escape destruction. But, according to Mr. Spurgeon, his Save-all is quite of another description. Addressing those who complained that they were too weak in mind and influence, he said, "Well, if you will come into our church, we will put you on a Save-all, and you shall give some light yet!" This is only a homely way of saying, that if a church is what it ought to be, weakness can be made into power, in its fellowship, and that the least may have a worthy task.

Let us take a case at the worst, and give you the full benefit of the admission that you are the "least in the church." You "have not power or influence to be anything, or to do anything." Oh, friend, depend upon it God has given you a burden to bear for your brother, if you will but find it. Here are the ants carrying sacks of corn before breakfast; and the little creatures of whose labours all the missionary deputations tell before a collection, still building their strongholds under the sea; and you cannot find anything to do! Tell us a little more of your case. You have not the gift of talking like some men! True, but can you be quiet? The church just now is much in need of earnest, quiet men, who will make no mischief, and will be content to work under ground, in silence, waiting for their true reward. If you cannot go into the battle-field, you may temper a sword in the armoury. You cannot go and see your distressed neighbour, because your words of comfort cannot flow apace! Now, please answer another question. Can you listen? If so, you are just the person to go and visit sick and troubled folk. They don't so much want to be talked to, as to tell their tale of woe to some one who can give them back a look of loving sympathy, or a few hearty words. Often, God knows, they want some one to sit by the bedside awhile, and to see that something is on the kitchen fire.

But your case is even worse than this. Your health is so feeble that you are physically unable to accomplish anything you desire. Oh, friend, what sad mistakes we make! If you can be patient in your sorrow and learn its true lessons, no member of Christ's church will be more useful. We never think we are doing anything unless we are working with our fingers or our tongues. You remember the three definitions in the old grammars—to be, to do, and to suffer. They describe the true mission of life. I remember an old invalid mourning that her days of usefulness in the church were ended, because she was bedridden. But many a one went into that sick room and came away from a glimpse of that patient face, having learned a lesson better than many sermons. Ah! when shall we understand how no life, faithfully lived, is ever spent in vain; and that the "great Head of the Church" has many ministries, where we see and honour but a few.

Your eye will fall upon these lines, dear reader, when the New Year is spreading out its possibilities to your hopes and fears. If you will but give up nursing your experiences and feelings, and take to blessing some one, and being something to your fellow travellers, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I cannot

indeed promise you freedom from those experiences on which we still mark the old, yet ever blessed symbol—but I *can* promise you a blessed New Year, and that is better than a happy one.

And now let us turn together as a New Year's lesson to that last scene in our Redeemer's life, which a wise man has called the "most holy place"—that solemn time before the "feast of the passover," "when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world." "Supper being ended, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hand, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded"! His divine entrance into the world is linked with the lowly act of service commonly performed by an eastern slave! But he came from heaven, and did not measure things by their outward importance, but by the love they bore! After that, can the greatest or the least say they cannot find a *task*? Carry with you into the New Year the remembrance of that "upper room," and many will bless you ere the bells of its December ring out its joys and sorrows.

A FEW FRIENDLY WORDS TO "RELIGIOUS DISSENTERS."

A "RELIGIOUS DISSENTER" means, in the language of modern ecclesiastical controversy, a dissenter who is not a member of the Liberation Society, —who never attacks "the church as by law established,"—nor takes part, either in public meeting, in the parish vestry, or at the hustings, in agitating for the separation of Church and State. A dissenter, *au contraire*, who is and does all these wicked things, is a "political dissenter." Of course we do not admit the justice of the distinction thus drawn, or the truth of the insinuation which that distinction clearly conveys. We use the phrase "religious dissenters" under protest, as a mere technicality, to avoid circumlocution. It is a plain, palpable fact, that the great body of Nonconformists is divided into the two sections which the names we have mentioned popularly, though unfairly, describe. There is one large class who, in the exercise of their political rights, endeavour to give practical effect to their ecclesiastical opinions; who habitually resist, in every lawful way, ecclesiastical impositions; who, at every fitting opportunity, expound the principles of Nonconformity by tongue and pen, and, by the same instrumentalities, assail the principle and expose the evils of the national Establishment; and who, by direct electoral and parliamentary action, seek to compass "the liberation of religion from State patronage and control." There is another large class who do none of these things. We believe that religious dissenters, in the true and proper sense of that term, are to be found in both classes; that the one class has no ground for impugning the piety of the other. But the phraseology of modern polemics, as we have said, dubs the former class "political" and the latter "religious;" and as our object is not now to quarrel about names, we consent, for the nonce, to employ the current nomenclature. Avowing ourselves "political dissenters" (though, we

trust, none the less religious for that), we wish to speak a few plain words of friendly remonstrance and reasoning to our brethren who disapprove of our modes of advocating our principles, and hold aloof from the plans of action by which we seek to carry those principles out to practical results. We only ask, at the outset, that as we give all credit to our friends for conscientious conviction and sincere motive, so they will accord the same credit to us; that they will believe us to be actuated by a solemn sense of religious duty in pursuing the course we adopt, as we believe them to be governed by the same in declining to pursue it with us.

We take for granted, then, that those whom we address agree with us in regarding the support and regulation of religious institutions by the civil power as contrary to the will of Christ, and obstructive to the interests of his kingdom in the earth. We have not now to do with those whose dissent from the Church of England is founded only on certain specific points of doctrine or ritual, but who have no objection to that church on the ground of its association with the State. With such persons we should have to adopt another course of argument; should have to point out how governmental interference with religion inevitably engenders corruptions in doctrine and discipline; how the endowment of a church by the State so stereotypes its creeds and its ceremonial as to make it well nigh impossible that a State church should teach the truth or maintain a pure worship; how it is the very fact that the Church of England is an established church which renders hopeless all attempts to reform it; and how the alterations which such a dissenter would desire can only be effected by political action, since only Parliament can change one article of the church's creed, or modify one prescription of her rubric.

But there are Nonconformists, not a few, who are thoroughly at one with us as to the unscripturalness and inexpediency of civil establishments of religion, who, nevertheless, for various reasons, decline to take part with us in our efforts to put an end to that Establishment as it exists in this country. We invite such seriously to examine with us some of the pleas by which the course they follow is usually defended, that we may ascertain how far those pleas can really be accounted valid; and then to ponder one or two reasons which, we think, should prevail with them to abandon their attitude of quiescence, and to cast in their lot with the "political dissenters."

It is difficult to persuade many of our friends that the question at issue between churchmen and dissenters is essentially and chiefly a religious, rather than a political question. Because the modes of action adopted are of necessity to a large extent political, they conclude that the whole controversy belongs to the domain of politics, not of religion. And yet surely it is not so. The question has its political aspects, certainly; but these, important as they are, dwindle into utter insignificance beside its religious aspects. This is no question of State expediency, but one which concerns the will of Christ and the spirituality of his church. Whatever it may be to some, Nonconformity to us is not a mere political theory, but part and parcel of the truth of the Gospel. It is our zeal for that truth, and our allegiance to the Lord of Truth, which makes us "political dissenters."

For, clearly, if this be a religious question at all, it is one of no slight or secondary importance. It affects the very constitution of Christ's kingdom upon earth; the means by which men are to be won to the Saviour and trained for heaven. And yet we sometimes hear dissenters speak as though, after all, a church establishment were no such mighty evil; as though the good wrought by means of it might be accepted as balancing the mischief. Alas! how little can we hope to agree with those who think and speak thus! We do all honour to the piety, activity, and usefulness, of not a few among the Anglican clergy. But even where a clergyman is godly and in earnest, the system he administers often proves too strong for him. And in how many parishes has the minister no more sympathy with, or fitness for, his work, than the least serious of his parishioners! And this is no accident of the system, but its legitimate result. The accident is when the pulpit of a State-endowed church is filled by a godly man. A slight evil! A system which stands directly opposed to the mind and law of the great Head of the Church; and which invests men with the solemn function of religious teaching,—nay, aims at securing for them a monopoly of that function, in total disregard of their possession of a single spiritual qualification for the work! And this is but a specimen of the spiritual mischiefs which the system breeds. For ourselves, we speak no words of haste or bigotry, but words of soberest and saddest conviction, when we affirm that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has no greater obstacle to its progress and power in this land of ours, than that furnished by the unholy and baneful alliance of the Church with the State. With such a conviction, how can we but be "political dissenters"!

It is urged by many excellent persons as a reason for their abstinence from this great struggle, that they find political agitation unfriendly to the maintenance of piety and spirituality of mind. We submit that the plea proceeds upon mistaken notions both of religion and politics. True piety does not consist in perpetual rapture, or perpetual contemplation, which resents the claims of common duty as an intrusion on its sacred privacy. The Gospel is meant, not to disqualify him who receives it for his duties as a man and a citizen, but to fit him to discharge those duties better than other men. The hot-house piety which dreads the open air of secular life, is a sickly and ineffective piety, and is in a fair way to become sicklier and feebler still. And politics, why should they be regarded as the very antithesis of religion,—the most worldly of all worldly pursuits? The shop is at least as secular as the hustings; and yet we do not find men abjuring business that they may the better care for their souls. The truth is, that business or politics, followed, as each too often is, in the low spirit of selfishness and trickery, treated as a mere game, does hinder and stunt the spiritual life. But the Christian is called to find in these pursuits a sphere of service to God and man; an opportunity for discipline and self-denial; and, thus followed, business, and politics too, tend to develope the strength and stature of the soul, to exercise, and so to invigorate, the graces of Christian character.

A desire to manifest Christian charity, and to maintain Christian union, is pleaded in defence of the passive attitude assumed by the "religious

dissenters." Yet that is surely no true charity which, seeing a brother in error, refuses to warn, lest it should offend him. It is a somewhat extreme method for escaping the difficulty of speaking the truth in love, to resolve not to speak it at all. We know well enough how apt earnestness of feeling and of speech, especially in opposing evil, is to degenerate into bitterness of temper and of tone. But we hold it to be better for the world that truth should be spoken out, even in harsh accents, than that, for fear of giving some pain, it should be withheld altogether. And we believe the true Christian course to be, not to stand aside from controversy for fear lest we be betrayed into an unholy spirit in conducting it, but to enter upon it in the spirit of faithfulness to him whose cause we espouse, with hearts chastened by humility, and seeking from God the grace which shall enable us to emulate the faithfulness and tenderness of him who was too full of love to let error go without warning, or sin without rebuke.

And as to Christian union, it is enough to ask, What is the greatest hindrance to its attainment in this country? Is not Christian union, at least in outward expression, a hollow pretence or a Utopian dream, as long as a State Church exists? Can any thoughtful observer of the most familiar phenomena of religious life in England, fail to recognise the truth of the pungent words of Goldwin Smith—"State establishments, forbidding, as they do under pain of ejection, any departure from the established dogma, or approximation to the opinions of other churches, are standing organizations of hopeless schism"? To us it seems that he best serves the cause of Christian union, who labours most strenuously to remove this mighty hindrance to its progress. The ardour of our sympathy with the Redeemer's prayer for the oneness of his church, makes us "political dissenters."

But our tactics, we are told, tend to defeat their own object. Our action, as Mr. Baldwin Brown puts it, "has mostly an unhappy consequence; it parades the whole force of our antagonists to resist it, and rarely fails to throw back by many stages the substantial progress of the cause whose interests we have at heart." Even if all this were so, we know not how we could do other than we do. For with us this question of action or inaction in this great struggle is no mere choice of policies, it is a question of obedience or disobedience to what we believe to be the will of Christ,—of faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the truth he has committed to our trust. Fidelity is ours; results we leave with him. But such is our perversity, that the very facts which Mr. Brown regards as presages of defeat, we look upon as proofs of progress and pledges of victory. That our action has "paraded the whole force of our antagonists to resist it," we deem one of the most hopeful among the present aspects of this great controversy. A general, who is conscious of superior strength, usually accounts it a point gained to have provoked his enemy to battle. And such is our humble, yet lofty, consciousness, for "in the name of the Lord we set up our banners." When truth and error are once brought fairly front to front, the conflict is half won. We seek no stolen triumph, desire no conquest for our principles but such as may be won in fair and knightly combat with those who oppose them. Let the friends of the Establishment produce their cause, bring forward their strong arguments: this is what we wish; we, too, will do the like, and "God defend the right!"

Political dissenters are so, not from choice, but from necessity. They are dissenters from a political church, that is all. For the national Establishment, as an establishment, is a secular, not a spiritual, institution. The spiritual agency and power would remain in all its integrity, if all that dissenters desire were accomplished to-morrow. We have no quarrel, we harbour no hostility, against the episcopal church, as a church. As a church (our profession may be scouted as hypocritical, but, God being our witness, it is true), we would fain see it mightier than it is, and, that it may be mightier, would have it freer and purer. But against the maintenance of this or any other church by political patronage, and its subjection to political control, we must protest and strive to the uttermost. And as political evils can only be met by political remedies, why, we must perforce be political. But if we be political, it is for Christ's sake. Our piety makes us political. When the Saviour would drive the traders from the temple, he used a weapon not often pressed into the service of religion, and raised a commotion but little in accordance with the usages of the holy place. But he did so, not because he loved scourging and tumult, but because the zeal of God's house ate him up.

To the supineness of the "religious dissenters" is due the apparent weakness of Nonconformity in England, and the impunity with which it is insulted by those in high places. On the "religious dissenters" rests the grave responsibility of perpetuating, by refusing to oppose in the only practical way, the abuses and evils of the State-church system. We do not dwell upon the thought, but only recommend to the earnest and prayerful study of our friends, Mr. Nevile's noble letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If his words do not rouse them to a truer sense of their obligations, ours, we fear, are little likely to do so. But of this we are sure, that if the dissenters of England were only united and resolute, in the calm but firm speaking out and acting out of their principles, no government and no parliament could afford to treat them and their claims with the insolent contempt with which they have been uniformly met during the past session. The day of freedom for religion would then not be far.

We have done. Our subject has proved too large for our limits, and we have been forced to content ourselves with hints, where we would fain have given extended argument and illustration. We are well aware, moreover, that the considerations we have urged are trite and commonplace enough. There is nothing new in them. But we are less concerned about the novelty than about the truth, of our words. And we do devoutly believe them to be true and seasonable. We believe that the times demand of all conscientious dissenters, that they seriously review the position they occupy in relation to this great question; that they ponder well their responsibilities in relation to the practical advocacy of the principles they profess. This controversy claims decision, and it must be taken up by us as part of our service and sacrifice for Christ and his cause, if it is to be settled aright. With this conviction, and in aid of this issue, we have written. We have wished also to indicate what, on this question, will be the position of *The Baptist Reporter*. "We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say."

MODERN MISSIONS.

Archdeacon Hare somewhere profoundly says, "A man's first word is *Yes;* his second *No;* his third *Yes* again. Many stop short with the first, few attain to the last." The remark was intended to apply to the progress of belief in the individual mind. Here the path of the most earnest thinkers, if they falter not midway, leads through the anxieties of doubt back to the simplicities of early faith; and the victim of haunting scepticism attains his spirit's true rest, when he becomes once more "a little child."

In the history of all Christian effort a similar progression may be observed. The young believer's "first word is *Yes,*" when he goes forth to do battle with the crimes and sorrows of the world. A childlike faith in the Divine promises sustains him. The weapons he wields he knows to be of celestial temper. Will not victory then be swift and sure? How often, after such a commencement, has the well-known story of the Reformer to be told again:—"The old Adam is too hard for young Melancthon!" This cry of sadness and scepticism is the young Melancthon's *No.* It is the second stage of feeling, in which so many of the noblest energies are crushed, the fairest hopes destroyed, the most heroic spirits paralyzed. But for all who are steadfast to the highest truth, and willing resolutely to walk, although in darkness, along the path which Divine command has traced, there is yet a further goal. For a while, indeed, beneath the shadows of doubt, and amid the wrecks of hope, there may be nothing but the stern conviction of duty to uphold them on their way, but the light is not far off. Again do the assurances of heavenly strength, and the pledges of certain victory, cheer the young Melancthon's heart. Only now he better understands the conditions of the promise. The *Yes* of his early days of faith is uttered more wisely and thoughtfully. His trust is once again that of the child, but it is combined with the intelligence of the man. He has now a better estimate of the largeness of the work, of his own weakness, and of the infinitude of that scale upon which Omnipotence works; and this, while it no longer throws a shade of misgiving over his hopes, has made his resolution calmer, his reliance humbler, his expectation more patient.

The history of Modern Missions, and of our own in particular, illustrates the same law. When the churches in modern times first awoke to their duty, and set on foot the enterprise of the world's evangelization, how ardent was their resolution, how exulting their confidence! Great things were to be attempted for God, great things were to be expected from God; and the expectation went hand in hand with the attempt. The faith of those days was truly the little child's; to look back from this distance how beautiful is it to see! The first tidings of success that came from the missionary field, were welcomed as the prelude of the song of jubilee. How exultant were the missionary hymns of that day, as for instance those of the noble-hearted Ryland, beginning,—

"Now let the slumbering church awake,"

and,—

"Rejoice, the Saviour reigns."

The missionary prayer-meeting was a time of holy joy, as well as of deep devotion. When a new part of the *Periodical Accounts* had arrived, the tidings ran through the whole congregation, creating a greater excitement even than news from the seat of war. Not a few among us can remember even to this day the eager tremulous joy with which many an old minister, whose latter days these new hopes of the world's salvation had brightened, would read out, on the first Monday evening in the month, the tales of endurance and of success. Then those strange names of regions far away! With what unction

were they enunciated,—and yet how uncouth they seemed! Was it uncontrollable emotion, or was it perplexity respecting pronunciation, that made the good pastor so often wipe his spectacles? To this day we remember the controversy about *Dinagepore*. Was the *g* hard or soft? were the *e's* to be pronounced or silent? Had the word three syllables, or four, or five? But these are small matters. Think of the thrill that pervaded the assembly, as the minister read out, "December 29th, 1800.—*The first Hindoo convert was this day baptized.* . . . The chain of the caste is broken, and who shall be able to mend it? . . . Ye gods of stone and clay, did ye not tremble, when in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one of your votaries shook you as dust from his feet!" Or again, "Mr. Ward writes on the 7th of February of the present year (1801), 'This day we have finished composing the Bengalee New Testament.'" Or again, "March 6th, 1803.—The first native Hindoo preacher has to-day preached his first sermon." These were, indeed, days of glorious tidings. Hope could not but be buoyant and faith undoubting. Soon, too, the glad news of success gained in other missionary fields, by other societies as well as by our own, deepened the joy and trust which had been at first evoked by the enterprise of Carey and his colleagues. From all parts of the world at once, came glorious and scarcely distant promise of an approaching millennium.

The most superficial observer cannot but discern the symptoms of a change. Missionary meetings are in few parts of the country crowded as of old. The prayer-meeting on the first Monday in the month is regarded with no greater interest than other devotional services, if not with actually less. *The Missionary Herald* awakens no such emotions as the olden *Periodical Accounts* were wont to inspire. The Baptist Missionary Society, as we all know, is at this moment in the pangs of a monetary "crisis," though men are ready to go out into the field. Once our Mission had to say imploringly to the churches, "We have the means if you will but furnish the men." Its tone is now changed. "We can find the men without much difficulty," it says; "but where is the money?"

Now we know very well that these symptoms partly arise from other causes than a real decline of zeal. For instance, the novelty of platform meetings was once a reason, besides the interest of the subject itself, why missionary anniversaries should be well attended. A similar remark may be made respecting those thrilling tales which can be told but once. The emotions excited by Ward of Serampore, by John Williams, or by William Knibb, can never be rekindled in their old intensity. Nor is the greatness and efficiency of the work done to be altogether measured by outward signs of earnestness. An engine may be most actively and energetically employed, when no rush of steam is heard, and when the furnace consumes its own smoke. We must allow, too, for temporary circumstances, and the vicissitudes which attend every great enterprise.

In estimating the true missionary fervour of the churches, therefore, it will be necessary to look beyond mere superficial indications. But the view thus afforded is scarcely more encouraging. To recur to a figure just used, the system is regarded too much as a machine. It is a magnificent engine, with a life throbbing at the centre sufficient to turn all the wheels; but this is not what is wanted. The unity should rather be that of a living body, with vital energy in every fibre. As the matter stands, the Missionary Committee, who know so well what the work is, are alive and earnest; so in many quarters are the ministers and the *children;* a few of the very rich display a noble sympathy with the work, so do a few of the very poor; but to the greater part of our churches it is not a matter of *earnest personal* concern. There is neither that faith nor that hope in Missions which characterised a former day.

We are not forgetting the foes which at the outset the missionary cause found in such numbers within the churches themselves. It had then to contend with a religious sentimentalism, falsely calling itself doctrinal religion, which, if the church could but enjoy its "comforts," was quite willing to leave the world to perish. By the power of truth and the testimony of success, this spirit was at length vanquished, and even enlisted on the side of Missions. Here, however, it has grown restless, and for some time past has been striving to reconcile its convictions of duty with the repeated disappointments of the church and the prophetic destinies of the world, by the fascinating visions of premillenarianism.

On the whole, the missionary cause seems to have passed out of the first stage above described into the second. The simplicity of early faith has been lost, and is succeeded by misgiving, not to say scepticism. The harp that was being tuned to celebrate the song of Jubilee is on the willows; and, though we do not doubt that the day of Jubilee will come, many of the most thoughtful and devoted among us are maintaining, that it will be, not through the Word, the Spirit, and the Church, but by the sudden appearance of the Son of God upon the scene, to sever the knot of the world's great mystery, and to exterminate, by miracle, a race incurably corrupt. The exulting *Yes*, which was once so natural and so glad a response to the Divine summons to labour and to hope, has been succeeded by the anxious, questioning, unhappy *No*.

In all this there is a stern but most salutary discipline. If the Old Adam of the world proves "too hard" for the church, it is but to test her patience and devotedness, and, above all, to teach her the great lesson of reliance upon God. When the humiliation of disaster and of "hope deferred" shall have led to this result, it will have done its work. Not always, indeed, does it issue in this at first. Perhaps the first impulses of disappointment may lead in quite other directions. Young Melancthon, when he found his hearers cold, may have been sorely tempted to diverge from the path of patient labour and of simple faith, to try more worldly expedients. So our missionary societies, finding the heathen obdurate abroad, and the churches apathetic at home, have not unfrequently been urged to adopt novel methods and adventitious attractions. Hence the expedients which have been superadded to the direct work of "preaching and teaching Jesus Christ" abroad; hence, too, the exhibitions of Hottentots and the like at missionary meetings at home, not to speak of even more questionable means of raising money and making a sensation. But, happily, the day for all this is passing or past. If the latent scepticism with regard to the work is not yet removed,—if in some quarters there is doubt, in others indifference,—there is at least no disposition to secularize the work, nor to desecrate its advocacy. The conductors of our missionary institutions feel more than ever that, come what may, their work is that of the world's evangelists. If they fail,—they fail; but for a moment's success they may not stoop to anything unworthy of their sublime vocation. The task, with all its conditions, is again unreservedly accepted. This of itself is one step towards the highest faith and towards ultimate triumph. All that now remains needful, is to read the promises of God in that clearer light in which our own past experience and the history of the world enables us to interpret them. With him a thousand years are but as one day. Let us not be astonished that in seventy years so little has been done to remedy the neglect of the church for eighteen centuries. Nay, let us rather give thanks that so much has been accomplished. And with regard to present duty, let us remember the wise man's profound suggestion: "He that observeth the clouds shall not sow, and he that observeth the winds shall not reap." That is, if we look to transient appearances, instead of to eternal laws and steadfast promises, we shall spend the seed-time in inactivity, and shall never have a harvest.

In such thoughts, the faith of the child will return to us, but clearer, stronger, more intelligent. We shall see that we were *not* wrong after all in anticipating the largest success, and that when we expected it immediately we did but "view the future as the present, and count the certainties of God as superior to time." It was no wonder that the early church, after the triumphs of the day of Pentecost, augured a speedy millennium. But as years passed on, and reverses succeeded, and faith and hope grew dim, they began to ask, "Where is the promise of his coming?" Then the very apostle through whose preaching those early wonders had been wrought, recalled the minds of disheartened believers to the unchanging truth of God, in words which, for their depth of suggestiveness, and their weight of encouragement, might be our motto in this hour of trial, "THE LORD IS NOT SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE, AS MEN COUNT SLACKNESS."

Poetry.

MY AIN COUNTREE.

I'M far frae my hame, an' I'm weary aftenwhiles
For the langed-for hame-bringing, an' my Father's welcome smiles;
I'll ne'er be fu' content until my een do see
The gowden gates o' heaven, an' my ain countree.

The earth is flecked wi' flowers, mony-tinted, fresh and gay,
The birdies warble blithely, for my Father made them sae;
But these sights an' these soun's will as naething be to me
When I hear the angels singing in my ain countree.

I've his gude word o' promise, that some gladsome day the King
To his ain royal palace his banished, hame will bring;
Wi' een an' wi' hearts running owre we shall see
The King in his beauty, an' our ain countree.

My sins hae been mony, an' my sorrows hae been sair,
But there they'll never vex me nor be remembered mair;
His bluid hath made me white, his hand shall dry mine ee,
When he brings me hame at last to my ain countree.

Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I wad fain be ganging noo unto my Saviour's breast;
For he gathers in his bosom witless, worthless lambs like me,
An' carries them himsel' to his ain countree.

He's faithfu' that hath promised; he'll surely come again;
He'll keep his tryst wi' me, at what hour I dinna ken;
But he bids me still to watch, an' ready aye to be,
To gang at any moment to my ain countree.

So I'm watching aye, an' singing o' my hame as I wait
For the soun'ing o' his footfa' this side the gowden gate:
God gie' his grace to ilk ane wha listens noo to me,
That we a' may gang in gladness to our ain countree.

Reviews.

Conformity to the Church of England. By EBENEZER BAILEY. London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co.

THERE have been agitated in England certain questions which have called forth the zeal and bitterness of partizanship; for example, Catholic Emancipation, Corn Laws, Reform in Parliament. Will the reader suppose that a clergyman, holding a poor benefice and having little hope of a better, and who had been a vehement opponent of all those measures, had entirely changed his opinion respecting them all in one year? The case is a purely suppositious one; for political life presents no such instance of conversion. But suppose it to have occurred, and, further, that the clergyman made no secret of his hope of rising to a more dignified position as the result of his novel opinions. One thing would be clear. No premier could risk his own character by making that man a bishop. Public opinion might not denounce him as a hypocrite; but it would certainly decide that it was impossible for him to prove his integrity, and that he must be content to remain in the shade for life.

Mr. Ebenezer Bailey was a catechumen of Mr. Spurgeon. During his career as a preacher, we believe it was evident to discerning men that he was not likely to be much prized as a Dissenting minister. If we are rightly informed, he was accustomed to denounce Episcopacy; vehemently to assail the Church of England; and yet more vehemently to assail infant baptism,—being scarcely able to speak in terms of civility of those who could not see that baptism must be administered by immersion, and limited to believers. He himself informs us that he had "imbibed the strongest and most noxious prejudices against the Establishment," and that these became year by year more deeply rooted till the year 1862. At that time, he became convinced that a national religious establishment is not wrong, but right,—that Episcopacy is Scriptural,—that a liturgy is lawful and desirable,—that infants ought to be baptized,—and that sprinkling is baptism.

Had it been allowed us to give advice to Mr. Bailey, when his opinions veered right round on all these points at once, the advice would have been as follows:—

"We have neither the right nor the wish to sit in judgment on you. To your own Master you stand or fall. Such is the human mind, such are its wonderful powers of self-deception, that it is impossible to say into what vagaries it may not sincerely sink. But remember that you are bound to provide 'for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.' For that important purpose, withdraw yourself from public view. Not only accept, but seek, some occupation less honourable and less lucrative than that you abandon. Your sudden changes of opinion on many very important subjects on which you have been accustomed to declaim with unusual impetuosity and confidence, if they lead to an advancement in your social and monetary position, will assuredly awaken the most painful apprehension in many of your friends, to whom you should beware of becoming a stumbling-block; and will also irreparably damage your own reputation, and thereby your usefulness. In the very delicate circumstances in which you are most unfortunately placed, no care to vindicate your character from the reproaches of the friends you forsake, and the distrust of those you join, can be too great."

Mr. Bailey has, we deeply regret to say, taken precisely the opposite course. He held *many* opinions which forbade him to become a clergyman. He changes them all suddenly, and proposes to become a clergyman; and, with the courage of infatuation, publishes these facts to the world. We grieve, certainly not for our own loss, but, first, for the dark errors into which, in this day of increasing light, he has fallen; and, chiefly, for his fatal act of self-disparagement. A human soul undergoing the process he has described, and voluntarily taking up the position he has assumed, is a very sad spectacle. Let our readers join with us in com-

mending him to the pity of the humane, and the mercy of God. We hope he did not forget himself when writing, page 15—"We have need to watch our own deceitful hearts, that we may listen to the teachings of the Bible with singleness of motive."

Mr. Bailey's book is dreary reading. There is nothing novel in it, but only a reproduction of the stale sophistries of former writers, with a slight but unpleasant mixture of assumption and self-complacency. The very first argument is based on the fact that "the appetite for *religious* instruction is neither so strong nor so universal as to secure an effective demand for it." A sensible and disinterested man could draw but one inference, namely, that Christians who have received religious instruction, and know its worth, should communicate it to those who will not of their own accord seek it. But from the prevalent disinclination to religion, Mr. Bailey turns with hope to the Government, seeming to forget that the Government wants religious teaching quite as much as the people. The people are deplorably irreligious, says this writer; and, therefore, he sagely turns with an eye of pious hope to the House of Commons! To trace him through seventy-four pages of such fallacies, would be insufferably wearisome. Unfeignedly do we grieve over a mind, capable of rather better things, loving to be thus duped, and mistaking such arguments for reasoning.

Mr. Bailey's present creed is very curious. Having persuaded himself that Scripture allows of superior as well as inferior ministers in a church, he leaps to the conclusion that a Lord Bishop, who shall rule over a hundred churches, is lawful and right (p. 50); he approves of the burial service, because it is designed only for believers, and seeks a position in which he will be compelled to read it over unbelievers (p. 62); he can "honestly accept" the words, "I absolve thee from all thy sins" (p. 64); he is quite in love with the Athanasian creed (p. 66); he approves of the rite of confirmation (p. 43); and, to crown all, Mr. Bailey believes that when infants are rightly baptized, they repent of sin and believe the Gospel (pp. 57, &c.)!

It has given us pain to write thus. Gladly would we have left this pitiable man to the degradation he has chosen; but the interests of truth, perhaps, required that his manifesto should not be wholly unnoticed.

Morning on the Mountains; or, Woman and her Saviour in Persia. By A RETURNED MISSIONARY. London: J. Nisbet & Co.

THE second title of this book, which we wish had been the only one, indicates its subject and purpose. The other is one of those sentimental, *ad captandum* titles, which we confess are always very distasteful to us. The story which the book tells is one of surpassing interest, but might have been, in some respects, better told. Not that we have any complaint to make of the author's style: that is clear, and often touching from its very simplicity. But the arrangement of the narrative might have been altered with much advantage both to its perspicuity and its interest. Thus, for example, the first chapter is occupied with details of the condition of the Nestorian women "without the Gospel;" the second recounts a visit paid by Miss Fiske to "Marbeeshoo;" and it is not till the third chapter that we are told who the Nestorians are, who Miss Fiske is, or where Marbeeshoo, Oroomiah, and the other long-named places which constitute the "scene of the narrative," are situated. Indeed, throughout, too much is taken for granted on the part of the reader in the way of preliminary knowledge of the Nestorian people, and the missionary work which is being carried on among them. This is, no doubt, partly owing to the fact that the book was originally written for American readers, who are well acquainted with the work of the Society to which the narrative refers. But the usefulness of the work for English Christians would have been increased by a little more care in adapting it to the taste and state of information on the subject of which it treats, which prevail in this country. The same American origin is betrayed by the peculiar, almost cant, religious phraseology with which the style abounds. To English ears "the monthly concert" is more suggestive of Mr. Sims Reeves and St. James's Hall, than of "the place where prayer is wont to be made."

But these are slight and superficial blemishes, and we have noticed them first, that our last words, and most likely to be remembered, may be our testimony to the deep and sacred interest with which we have read the book, and our earnest advice to our friends to read it too. It is, as its title indicates, a narrative of the great things God has wrought for women in Western Persia, by the agents of the American Board of Foreign Missions. It introduces us to a people whose history and character are full of interest; and relates a story of Christian labour and success out of the track of our ordinary English missionary records. It tells of triumphs of Divine grace which must make glad the heart of every servant of Christ; of self-sacrificing devotion and wise adaptation of means to ends, on the part of the missionaries, which have won our most respectful admiration; and of a warmth of zeal and constancy of endurance, on the part of the converts, which confirm our faith in the power of the Gospel, and brighten our hopes for the future of a land where such a band of witnesses for the truth has been raised up. We would fain furnish some extracts to warrant our commendation, but space forbids. We will only say once more that our heart has been deeply stirred, and our eye often moistened, as we have read the story; and we are sure none of our readers will repent who may follow our example and advice, and read it for themselves.

The Practical Works of the Rev. J. G. Pike, of Derby. With a Biographical Sketch. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.

In the list of modern Baptist worthies, few men have been more widely known, and none have been held in higher esteem by those who knew him best, than the author of the useful treatises which compose this goodly volume.

A body of above the average bulk, and a mind of more than ordinary strength, were among Mr. Pike's natural endowments. A moderate amount of classical learning, a cursory acquaintance with general literature, an extensive knowledge of English theology, and an unusual familiarity with the Holy Scriptures, may be named as some of his personal acquirements. But these qualities were outshone by the lustre of his moral and spiritual excellence. All who knew "the man and his communication" were unanimous in their conviction that he was a Christian of the highest rank; and while "looking steadfastly on him," and listening to his impressive addresses, we have often been constrained to ask, "Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God is"!* The accordance between his doctrine and manner of life, his purpose and his faith, was so obvious, that the most suspicious never doubted his sincerity, nor could the most censorious convict him of inconsistency. The biographical sketch at the beginning of this volume presents many facts and details illustrative of his superior piety and zeal, and of the "much fruit" whereby he glorified his heavenly Father. Our space forbids any further reference to these, and permits of only a brief notice of those productions of his pen which are here collected under the name of his "Practical Works." These works were all published at separate intervals during his life; but they are not the whole of his publications. Some pamphlets of a controversial kind, vindications of his denominational tenets, a good catechism, contributions of many kinds to magazines, and sundry tracts written for the Religious Tract Society, are not included in this collection. Those which it contains are eminently practical; and as the best proof of the sterling worth of some of them, it may be stated that they have been circulated in years past *by thousands and by tens of thousands.* The mere mention of their titles and topics, without a single word of eulogy, may suffice to recommend them to those who never saw them,—more especially to the race of younger readers,—indeed to all who wish to spend their money and time in the purchase and perusal of what will do them good. The Divine Origin of Christianity; Persuasives to Early Piety; A Guide for Young Disciples on their Way to Heaven; Christian Liberality; The Duty of Christians to Marry only in the Lord; The Christian

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* Genesis xli. 38.

Ministry Contemplated; Religion and Eternal Life, or Irreligion and Perpetual Ruin, the only Alternatives for Mankind; Immanuel, the Christian's Joy; Parental Care; Sixteen Sermons; and Three Association Letters on the Spread of the Gospel, on the Duties of Young Members of Churches, and on the Characteristics of an Earnest Ministry:—such are the themes on which this faithful servant of God expatiated with a seriousness and a simplicity rarely equalled, and with a pertinency and a pathos never surpassed. We hope that this republication will meet with the success it merits.

A Letter to the Plymouth Brethren on the Recognition of Pastors. By H. Grattan Guinness. London: J. Nisbet & Co.

Mr. Guinness professes himself a warm admirer of the general character and worship of the Plymouth Brethren. He would have identified himself with that body, but for what he deems their unscriptural and mischievous views concerning the Christian ministry and pastorate. And he writes this letter to convince them of their error, and to "shew unto them a more excellent way." We cordially wish for his sound and Scriptural arguments greater success than we think they are likely to find among those to whom they are addressed. For, with some exceptions in matters of detail, the only point on which we should be disposed to differ with Mr. Guinness, is his high admiration for the body of Christians in question. That there are among the Plymouth Brethren many men of exalted and exemplary piety,—many who deserve all Mr. Guinness's praise,—we gladly admit and testify. But as a body, their sectarian exclusiveness, even while they profess to rebuke all sectarianism; their arrogant spiritual assumptions; their insistence upon every detail of their belief as though it were a cardinal doctrine of Christianity,—an insistence which bears its legitimate fruit in the number and bitterness of their internal divisions; these characteristics, we confess, compel us to regard them as about the least attractive of religious denominations. They are, we think, little likely to resign any part of their creed or practice,—least of all this, which makes every man a teacher and ruler,—at the representation of an outsider. Perhaps of all outsiders Mr. Guinness is the most likely to prevail with them. We can only say again, we wish he may; though the utmost success we dare expect for him is, to become the founder and leader of one more among the many sects which make up the heterogeneous whole of Plymouth Brethrenism.

The Child's Book of Praise. Edited by the Rev. Chas. Vince. London: Virtue & Co.

The New Sunday School Hymn-Book. Edited by Edwin Hodder. London: Jackson, Walford, & Hodder.

The Little Hymn-Book. London: Sunday School Union.

All these books indicate a decided advance in the matter of hymn-making for children. What is needed is a simple expression of praise, such as children can understand,—with simple paraphrases of such parts of Scripture as are likely to kindle devotional feeling. Mr. Vince tells us in his preface that he has put hymns in his collection which some may think too old, but which experience teaches him children can well understand. We think him right, and that he might have added, that a great many hymns are spoiled by telling us in every other verse that they are *meant for children*. Why should a child begin his song with, "We are but young;" or, "Lord, I am young"? or address his companions as if he were a teacher: "Come, little children, come;" "Pray, little children, pray," &c., &c.! Better far, that the hymn should be the simple utterance of praise, and that the way it catches the child's ear and fills his heart by its truth and music, should tell him it was intended for him.

Many hymns sung at Sunday school anniversaries are composed for the praise of "Sunday schools" and "Kind teachers," &c., rather than that of the most high God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Some of the new hymns in Mr. Hodder's collection are very good; but we miss some few favourites, which we do not think are compensated for by the *majority* of the new ones. The smaller

books do not profess to supply many new hymns, but they are on the whole well chosen—little picture hymns, happily interspersed with songs of praise.

Missionary Scenes—Baptist Missionary Society. London: Elliot Stock.

THE Baptist Missionary Society has recently published a series of cards under this title. There are ten cards, and they are sold for a shilling. Each card contains a brief account of a Missionary field occupied by the Society, and gives beautifully coloured views intended to illustrate the account. Of course the cards are meant chiefly for young people and for Sunday schools. We very heartily recommend them. For gifts in families, and rewards in Sunday schools, nothing could be more suitable.

Christian Cabinet.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

EVERY man feels, and not strangely, that there never were such experiences of life as his own. No joy was ever like our joy, no sorrow ever like our sorrow. Indeed, there is a kind of indignation excited in us when one likens our grief to his own. The soul is jealous of its experiences, and does not like pride to be humbled by the thought that they are *common*. For, though we know that the world groans and travails in pain, and has done so for ages, yet a groan heard by our ear is a very different thing from a groan uttered by our mouth. The sorrows of other men seem to us like clouds of rain that empty themselves in the distance, and whose long-travelling thunder comes to us mellowed and subdued; but our own troubles are like a storm bursting right overhead, and sending down its bolts upon us with direct plunge.

But there have been human hearts, constituted just like ours, for six thousand years. The same stars rise and set upon this globe that rose upon the plains of Shinar or along the Egyptian Nile; and the same sorrows rise and set in every age. All that sickness can do, all that disappointment can effect, all that blighted love, disappointed ambition, thwarted hope, ever did, they do still. Not a tear is wrung from the eyes now, that, for the same reason, has not been wept over and over again in long succession since the hour that the fated pair stepped from paradise, and gave their posterity to a world of sorrow and suffering. The head learns new things, but the heart for evermore practises old experiences. Therefore our life is but a new form of the way men have lived from the beginning.

When the landsman first goes down upon the deep, to see what storm-ploughing means, what furrows the wind draws, seedless and unplanted, he feels in every shivering nerve that never was such storm known before. Now, he bethinks himself with horror, there has come upon the deep a fury never till then let loose. But the clouds laugh, and the winds know that ten thousand times before they have terrified just such inexperienced wretches. Yea, long ere a ship dared the central ocean, storms had navigated it, nor failed to pursue their dreadful sport ever since a keel crossed the perilous deep.

Not only are such experiences the hereditary legacy of men, rolled over and over, and sent down in succession upon every generation, but the methods by which men have met and conquered trouble, or been slain by it, are the same in every age. Some have floated on the sea, and trouble carried them on its surface as the sea carries cork. Some have sunk at once to the bottom as foundering ships sink. Some have run away from their own thoughts. Some have coiled themselves up into a stoical indifference. Some have braved the trouble and defied it. Some have carried it as a tree does a wound, until by new wood it can overgrow and cover the old gash. A few in every age have known the divine art of carrying sorrow and trouble as wonderful food; as an invisible garment that clothed them with strength; as a mysterious joy, so

that they suffered gladly, rejoicing in infirmity, and, holding up their heads with sacred presages whenever times were dark and troublous, let the light depart from their eyes, that they might by faith see nobler things than sight could reach.

The most affecting records of literature are those which repeat to us the sacred joy of souls in trial—their victory, and the causes of it. Job says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Moses "endured as seeing him who is invisible." Isaiah had sounded forth, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. . . . And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

David has left no sweeter psalm than the short twenty-third. It is but a moment's opening of his soul; but—as when one, walking the winter street, sees the door opened for some one to enter, and the red light streams a moment forth, and the forms of gay children are running to greet the comer, and genial music sounds, though the door shuts and leaves the night black, yet it cannot shut back again all that the eye, the ear, the heart, and the imagination have seen—so in this psalm, though it is but a moment's opening of the soul, are emitted truths of peace and consolation that will never be absent from the world.

The twenty-third psalm is the nightingale of the psalms. It is small, of a homely feather, singing shyly out of obscurity; but oh, it has filled the air of the whole world with melodious joy, greater than the heart can conceive! Blessed be the day on which that psalm was born!

What would you say of a pilgrim commissioned of God to travel up and down the earth singing a strange melody, which, when one heard, caused him to forget whatever sorrow he had? And so the singing angel goes on his way through all lands, singing in the language of every nation, driving away trouble by the pulses of the air which his tongue moves with divine power. Behold just such a one! This pilgrim God has sent to speak in every language on the globe. It has charmed more griefs to rest than all the philosophy of the world. It has remanded to their dungeon more felon thoughts, more black doubts, more thieving sorrows, than there are sands on the sea shore. It has comforted the noble host of the poor. It has sung courage to the army of the disappointed. It has poured balm and consolation into the heart of the sick, of captives in dungeons, of widows in their pinching griefs, of orphans in their loneliness. Dying soldiers have died easier as it was read to them; ghastly hospitals have been illumined; it has visited the prisoner and broken his chains, and, like Peter's angel, led him forth in imagination, and sung him back to his home again. It has made the dying Christian slave freer than his master, and consoled those whom, dying, he left behind mourning, not so much that he was gone, as because they were left behind, and could not go too. Nor is its work done. It will go singing to your children and my children, and to their children, through all the generations of time; nor will it fold its wings till the last pilgrim is safe, and time ended; and then it shall fly back to the bosom of God, whence it issued, and sound on, mingled with all those sounds of celestial joy which make heaven musical for ever.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

LITTLE SORROWFUL.

"And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren; and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bore him with sorrow." Through this little passage, as through a lens, we look back and see a sorrow-stricken Hebrew mother, yet pale and weak from child-bearing, with a new-come infant in her arms. She puts the mark of her grief on the brow of her boy in the name she gave him. She calls him Jabez, which signifies "sorrowful." Why, we know not. Whether it was that she brought him into the world with no common anguish, and at the peril of her own life—or whether the time of his birth was the time of her

own widowhood, so that he had no father living to welcome him — or whatever the disaster that darkened her lot, so it was that she put the gloom of her own heart on the name of her darling. She called him Sorrowful, and he kept the name to his dying hour.

Short-sighted mother! While she thought of her child as born in sorrow to bring her new anxieties and cares, while she baptized him with tears, lo! this very object of her grief and solicitude becomes the ornament of her house! He lives to outstrip all his brethren. The prayer recorded of him in the fourth chapter of the Chronicles is one of the most beautiful in the whole Bible. God answered it all. His after career was so lofty and so beneficent that people must have wondered how he came to bear so doleful a name. None so happy—none so prosperous — none so honoured — as poor Little Sorrowful! His history is like the April shower, that begins in clouds and tears, but ends in brilliant sun-bursts, and in rainbows painted on the sky.

Now, we are all of us just as short-sighted as this Hebrew mother, who named her boy from her fears and not from her faith, and at last found God better to her than she expected. We persist in naming things sorrows which prove to be blessings in disguise. We often congratulate people on receiving what turns out to be their ruin. We quite as often condole with them over a lot which is fraught to them with blessings above all price. Let us be careful how we condole with those who are under the merciful discipline of a loving God. We may make worse mistakes than was made by the mother of Jabez. Be careful how you condole with a man who has lost his fortune, or has been disappointed in his ambitious schemes. While his purse is becoming empty, his soul may be filling full with God's grace; while he is walking through the vale of humiliation, he may be getting more of the "herb called heart's-ease" into his bosom than he ever knew while on the giddy heights of prosperity. Many a man has been bankrupted into heavenly riches. Be careful how you tell a sick friend that his sickness is an affliction —when it may be sent him to melt his heart, to alarm him into reflection, and to bring him to repentance. Many a man's sickness has given him an eternal health; and his room of suffering has been the vestibule to Christ's favour, and to the inheritance of the saints.

Let us be careful, too, in what terms we condole with the weeping mother whose darling child has just found its angel-wings, and flown away to paradise. If we wish to sorrow for any parent, let it be for her whose living child is debased into an idol, or a frivolous overdressed toy, or a hard, cunning, self-seeker, or a self-indulgent tyrant, who shall yet break the heart of her who bore him. A thousand times over have I pitied more the mother of a living sorrow, than I have pitied the mother of a departed joy. Parents! spare your tears for those whom you have laid down to sleep in their narrow earth-beds, with the now withered rose-bud on their breasts. They are safe; Christ has them in his sinless school, where lessons of celestial wisdom are learned by eyes that never weep. Save your tears for your living children, if they are yet living in their sins, untouched by repentance, unfeeling, and unconverted. Those of your family whom God considers dead are those who are yet dead in trespasses and guilt—alive to the world and the devil, but dead to the voice of Christ.

How often do we cover our best blessings with a pall, while we decorate with garlands our temptations, or the sources of our saddest sorrows or our spiritual shame! Any one who had looked in upon the old patriarch Jacob on that gloomy evening while he was bewailing the absence of his sons in Egypt, would have heard the querulous complaint, "All these things are against me." He is rather a Jabez than a Jacob, then. Joseph is not; Simeon is not; and they have carried away Benjamin, too, who bore in his boyish face the photograph of Rachel, whom he had laid to her sleep by the wayside of Bethlehem. He calls his lot a sad one. But just at the door are the returning caravan, who are bringing to him the sacks from Egypt's granaries, and the joyful invitation to go up and see his long-lost Joseph in Egypt's imperial palace. His dark hour is just before the day. His trial proves his deliverance. God is better to him

than his fears. What he baptized a "sorrow" has grown into a mercy too big for words.

There are a hundred lessons to be learned from this brief passage about Jabez and his short-sighted mother; it is a bough that if well shaken will rain down golden fruit. We learn from it not to be frightened by present fears, or cast down by present troubles. We learn from it that many of life's best things—yea, the life of heaven-seeking piety itself—begin in tears and griefs for sin, in oppositions and sharp conflicts of the soul. We learn not to lose heart in labours of love for Christ and humanity, because the infant enterprise had to be "brought forth in sorrow," like the Hebrew mother's son. The very labours that cost us the most anxiety and self-denial and toil, often, like Jabez, "enlarge their borders" and grow into the most honourable and useful of all our undertakings. Never despair of a good work. Never despair of the cause of Right. Baptized with tears in its infancy, it has the life of God in its young veins. Never despair of a child. The one you weep the most for at the mercy-seat may fill your heart with the sweetest joys. Never despair of a soul. And never baptize either your children or your good enterprises "sorrowful," until you know how they probably will turn out, and what an All-wise and All-merciful God means to do with them. —*T. L. Cuyler.*

Christian Activity.

THE BAPTISTS IN SWEDEN.

In the summer of 1835, a Swedish sailor might have been seen on the wharves of the city of New York, passing from group to group of recently arrived travellers, whose peculiar dress and language marked them as emigrants from the forest-depths or smiling river banks of old Germany. The sailor would approach one and another with kind aspect and cordial pressure of the hand, thus showing that he sought their welfare. And then he would place in their hands a German tract, which might convey to them the solemn thoughts which he longed to expound, but was, through ignorance of the language, unable himself to utter.

Thus laboured, day after day, as Tract Missionary among the German emigrants, Frederic Olaus Nilsson. He had, during the preceding year, been led to the Saviour, and it was now his earnest desire to promote in some way the cause of his divine Master. Very few Swedes or Norwegians came at that time to the shores of the New World, and Nilsson felt a longing desire to speak to his own countrymen, and to his kindred, of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

His desires and his convictions of duty grew so strong, that in the autumn of 1839 he left New York, and went over to his native country in a Swedish vessel. He was strengthened in his conviction that he was in the path of duty, when he found that the blessing of God accompanied his efforts among the crew of the vessel. Several of them during the voyage sought and found the Saviour.

Once more at home in his native parish, in the district of Halland, he commenced preaching Christ from house to house among his relatives and friends. Soon the neighbours, and then those from a considerable distance, came to hear the words of eternal life. The work grew on Nilsson's hands, and in a short time the Christian sailor was engaged day and night in preaching Jesus and him crucified, to eager, anxious listeners. He went from village to village, from parish to parish, and, by the blessing of God on his labours, very many souls during the winter of 1839-40, were awakened, and many found peace in believing.

In the spring of 1842, Nilsson was appointed as colporteur among the seamen at Gothenburg, under the direction of the American Seaman's Friend Society. His summers were spent in Gothenburg, but in the winter he made missionary excursions into the neighbouring districts of Bohus, Elfsburg, Skaraburg, and Halland.

While thus labouring for the good of others, his own mind was not entirely at peace. Perplexing questions had arisen. The diligent study of the Scriptures had caused him to doubt the propriety of some things which he had hitherto received unhesitatingly.

Was it right to admit unconverted persons to the Lord's Supper? Was it right for a believer to hold communion and church fellowship with an unbeliever? Was it right for the Church of God to be under the rule of the State? And, lastly, was it right to make the sprinkling of unconscious infants take the place of the baptism of believers?

It was in the year 1845 that Nilsson was first led to search the Scriptures on the subject of baptism. A young Swedish sailor came to Gothenburg. He, like Nilsson, had, while sojourning in America, been baptized in New York, by the Rev. Ira R. Steward, pastor of the Mariners' Church. With this Christian brother Nilsson held many interesting conversations on religious subjects. From Hamburg, whither Capt. Shröder went to join his ship, he wrote to Nilsson, and in his letter he for the first time alluded to the subject of baptism, saying:—"You ought to search the New Testament on the subject of baptism, because it is a subject of greater importance than you have hitherto thought."

These words made a deep impression on Nilsson. He read with much interest the tracts on Baptism which accompanied the letter. Above all, he took heed to the brotherly admonition to "Search the Scriptures."

He went through the New Testament, carefully noting all the passages that speak of baptism, and to his astonishment, he found nowhere that support for infant sprinkling which he had been accustomed to suppose was to be found there. This discovery startled him, and filled him with anxiety. He turned to the writings of Luther, in whom he had ever placed great confidence. But he found that, on this subject, the great Reformer built his arguments on a sandy foundation. They rested not on the sure Word of God. Other Pædobaptist authors he consulted with a similar result.

From books he turned to friends. He sought the counsel of a learned and pious Lutheran minister, whom he highly respected, and they held frequent and long conversations on the subject.

The result of all this study, research, mental conflict and earnest prayer, was such as, with God's blessing on sincere efforts to know his will, might justly have been expected. Nilsson found that infant sprinkling was nowhere enjoined of God, and the path of duty was plain before him. He must arise and be baptized. In Sweden there was no one to be found to administer the ordinance. He therefore went to Hamburg in July, 1847.

After some weeks spent in studying the doctrines, articles of faith, and constitution of the Baptist church in that city, he offered himself as a candidate for baptism. On the 1st of August in that year, he was baptized by the Rev. J. G. Oncken, in the river Elbe.

The question now arose, Should he and his wife (who had shared in his conflicts and had arrived at the same conviction as he had) seek in America a home where, unmolested, they might worship God according to the dictates of their conscience,—or should they remain in Sweden, and among their countrymen and former friends bear witness to the truth? They sought guidance from God in earnest prayer, and finally determined to remain in Sweden and confess the truth, whatever might be the consequences to themselves.

Nilsson was fully aware how Baptist, or *Anabaptist*, views (as they termed them) would be regarded by his countrymen, and even by his former Christian friends; but, trusting in God, he went onward. He met, as he had expected, with much opposition. His views of the truth as regarded baptism were met by some with horror, and many whom he regarded as his spiritual children withdrew from him entirely. This was a sore trial. Some, however, were convinced, as he had been, of the necessity of believers' baptism, and were desirous to receive the ordinance.

The church at Hamburg sent the Rev. A. P. Förster, who, on September 21st, 1848, baptized the wife of Nilsson, two of his brothers and two other believers, in the Cattegat, near Gothenburg. That same night the first Baptist church in Sweden, consisting of six members, was organized in the house

of B. N. Nilsson, in the parish of Landa, district of Halland.

Scarcely more than fourteen years have passed away since that little company of baptized believers banded themselves together in the name of the Lord; and now, in the statistics of the Baptist churches of Sweden for the year 1863, we find that they number 161 churches, and that the sum total of their membership is 5,515. Well may we exclaim, What hath God wrought! Though persecution hath raged, and the rulers have taken counsel together, yet the Word of the Lord has grown mightily and prevailed.

In the spring of 1849, Nilsson went to Hamburg to be ordained. He was ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands, by the Revs. J. G. Oncken, J. Köbner, and Schauffler, May 6th, 1849, in the meeting-house of the Baptist church in Hamburg. He returned to Sweden, and continued his labours in the Redeemer's cause, sustained by the Baptist Mariners' church, New York.

But he was not long permitted to proceed unmolested. Several of the members of the church had been brought up before the parish priests and their vestries, and severely threatened, and now Nilsson himself was summoned to appear, July 4th, 1849, before the Consistory of Gothenburg.

After a trial which lasted about two hours, Nilsson was found guilty of having left the true church, and of having maliciously enticed others into heresy. After being admonished to return to the State Church, and warned that in case he continued in heresy the laws would be put in force against him, Nilsson was suffered to depart. The remainder of the year he was unmolested by the civil power, and continued unceasingly engaged in his Master's work.

The priests, however, in many places, commenced preaching against the Baptists, and inflaming the minds of the people. Mobs would often collect around the house in which Nilsson and his little flock were assembled for worship, smashing the windows, breaking in the doors, and assailing the worshippers with stones and other missiles. Besides these personal outrages, persecutions in other forms came thick and fast upon these poor, despised followers of Jesus. Friends and neighbours, and, in some instances, near relatives disowned them, and refused to hold any further intercourse with them. Employers withheld their patronage; and in very many instances the day-labourer, or the weaver, who dared to join himself to the despised Baptists, found himself suddenly turned out of employment, and cut off from the means of earning his daily bread. Much suffering ensued, yet these persecuted ones continued steadfast; and wherever Nilsson went preaching the Word, eager listeners assembled to hear him.

On January 1st, 1850, Nilsson was at the house of one of the members of the church, in the District of Elfsburg. A little band were assembled together for prayer and conference. During the day-time they had stationed sentinels to give warning of approaching danger. Having been unmolested during the day, they felt secure when evening drew on, and the sentinels left their posts and joined the little company inside the house. Nilsson was engaged in preaching, when suddenly a loud knocking was heard at the door. On opening it, they found that the house was surrounded by a number of men armed with clubs, pistols, old rusty swords, sticks, and muskets. They were led on by a deputy-sheriff, who, after requiring Nilsson to give his name, caused him to be seized and dragged out of the house. The tears and entreaties of his friends were responded to by blows and curses. Nilsson was thrown into a sleigh, and hurried off to the village tavern. At the door of this tavern he was left for a considerable time, exposed to the insults and outrages of the infuriated mob, while his keepers sat within the house, drinking brandy. At last he was taken before the sheriff, who, after threatening and cursing him, committed him to the county gaol. The dreary sleigh-ride was resumed, and soon after midnight Nilsson was lodged in a miserable cell. A heap of filthy straw thrown on the stone floor was his only bed. In this wretched abode he was kept in close confinement for six days. No one, not even his wife, was allowed to visit him, nor was he permitted to write to any one.

During the night of January 7th, Nilsson was transferred to Gothenburg, about forty miles distant. Here he was lodged in the district prison, and locked

up in a room with eight criminals. Before entering the prison, Nilsson had been permitted, through the humanity of his keeper, to see his wife, and hold converse with her for a few moments. She accompanied him to the threshold; she saw the opening and closing again of the heavy prison gates; she heard the grating of the ponderous bars and bolts that severed her from her husband; and, overwhelmed with grief, she rushed out into the street, weeping and wringing her hands. A friend who recognized her accosted her with words of kindness and sympathy. She confided to him her sad tale, and he advised her to go direct to the Governor, and relate the facts to him. The Governor granted to Mrs. Nilsson a written order for her husband's release from his unjust and harsh imprisonment. She hastened with it to the gaol, and soon his prison doors were opened, and to his surprise and joy he found that he was free.

The respite from persecution was, however, very brief. About a month later (Feb. 11th) Nilsson received a written summons to appear before the Gotha High Court of Justice, held at Jonköping, to answer to the charges of having adopted and disseminated erroneous sentiments and practices. In a few days he obeyed the summons, making, on his way thither, a wide missionary excursion for the purpose of visiting and strengthening his brethren. Nilsson remained ten days at Jonköping, and appeared twice before the High Court, on the 8th and again on the 11th March. On both occasions the great hall of justice was crowded, and many of the spectators shed tears, so great was the interest excited by this cruel and unrighteous persecution.

Many also manifested a desire to hear more of this way, everywhere spoken against. Nilsson repeatedly addressed large assemblies in his Master's name. On the last Lord's day of his stay at Jonköping, the numbers that came to hear him were so great that many remained outside in the street, all listening with earnest attention.

A few days after he had left Jonköping, the minutes of his trial were printed in pamphlet form, and scattered through the land. They appeared also, with various comments, in most of the leading journals of Sweden. The means used to suppress the preaching of the Word tended rather to its furtherance. In the words of Nilsson:—

"From this day the Baptists and their doctrines were no longer confined to an obscure corner of the land, and to a few poor despised labourers. The truth was with trumpet voices proclaimed on the house tops, and the sound thereof re-echoed from cottage to palace, throughout the length and breadth of the land. Thus my appearance before the High Court at Jonköping was the public introduction of Baptist principles into Sweden. Let now the poor sailor be banished from the realm! What matters that? The truths that by his trial have been disseminated in Sweden can never be banished. *Soli Deo gloria!*"

The sentence of banishment pronounced against Nilsson by the High Court of Justice, was read to him April 29th. Permission being granted to appeal to the king, Nilsson went to Stockholm in the latter part of May. He lodged an appeal in the proper office, and had also a personal interview with King Oscar.

During his stay in Stockholm, Nilsson became acquainted with several pious and evangelical Christians, who had become dissatisfied with the State Church, and were considering the subject of baptism. From them he experienced much Christian sympathy.

Nilsson availed himself of every delay which the law afforded him, in the form of appeals and petitions, not from any hope that his sentence would be reversed, but in order to lengthen out the period of his stay in his native country. He sought to improve this interval by encouraging and exhorting his little flock, who looked forward with sadness and anxiety to the approaching separation.

The period, however, at length arrived when the last petition was rejected, the last warning to leave the country was sounded in his ears. On July 4th, 1851, Nilsson and his wife took leave of their weeping friends, and departed for Copenhagen. They left behind them in Sweden fifty-six baptized believers scattered in different districts. The oversight of this scattered flock was entrusted to Bernhardt N. Nilsson (brother to Frederic), who is now pastor of the church in Torpa.

Nilsson continued nearly two years with the church in Copenhagen, filling the office of pastor during the last year of his stay. In the spring of 1853, he was urgently solicited by some of the members of the Baptist church in Sweden to accompany them to the United States. The storm of persecution continued to rage, and a little band of from twenty to thirty believers determined to seek in the New World the privilege denied them in their own land, "freedom to worship God." Nilsson consented to accompany them, and in June, 1853, he and his little flock landed in New York.

Here must end the first chapter in the deeply interesting history of the Baptists in Sweden. In another number we hope to continue the story.

Words of Wisdom for Christian People.

CHOOSING A MINISTER.

A LEGEND OF OLDEN TIME.

In one of the cities of Asia during the first century, a number of disciples had met together to choose a minister.

"We need," said A, "located as our church is, in the very heart of a city given to idolatry, a man not only distinguished for talents and attainments, but also for eloquence; I would therefore nominate Apollos, who is 'an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures.'"

"Apollos is undoubtedly eloquent," said B, "and a good biblical scholar; but we want a bold, energetic man, who will grapple with the giant evils of our day, and fearlessly 'fight the good fight of faith.' Such a one is Cephas, whose very name suggests firmness and strength. He is also ardent and zealous, and will 'stir up our pure minds by way of remembrance.'"

"We live among men of great learning and classical attainments," said D, "and I would ask whether Cephas is sufficiently scholarly to meet the arguments and sophistries of men distinguished as philosophers and critics?"

"If you want a highly-educated man," said E, "select Paul. His scholarship is undoubted, and his learning and attainments will secure a prominent position among our distinguished men. Besides, he has a wonderful power of attraction. Why, the Galatians loved him with such intense devotion, that, if it had been possible, they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them unto him."

"If Paul is such a great man," said F, "it is a pity he has not a juster appreciation of his abilities. He said himself, when at Corinth, that he came among them 'in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling.'"

"Paul's peculiar talent," said G, "seems to consist in writing well. His letters are weighty and powerful, but"— here the speaker's manner was sarcastic—"his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

This attack upon Paul irritated his friends, and angry words might have followed, had not H, a pale, sad-looking man, commenced speaking.

"Brethren," said he, "if our Master had seen fit to afflict you with the terrible evils that have befallen me, you would see the need of a minister who can 'bind up the broken-hearted.' Such a one is Barnabas, who is eminently a 'son of consolation.' Let him be our minister."

"Barnabas," said K, "is a lovely Christian, and well qualified to comfort the afflicted, but I doubt whether, in other respects, he is equal to any of the candidates already named."

"I came here as a listener," said L, "but you will allow me to make one remark. It seems to me that you expect every possible perfection to cluster around your chosen candidate. Can such a man be found?"

"I think I have such a one in view," said M. "It is not necessary for me to name him; enough for me to say he is the 'brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches.'"

As they were about to discuss the merits of the nameless candidate, a gentle knock was heard, and, to the surprise of all, Paul himself entered.

"My brethren," said Paul, "you

know that for a time I have had 'the care of all the churches,' and I find that our Master has not given to any one minister every diversity of spiritual gift, but has distributed his gifts as He saw necessary for 'the edifying of the body of Christ.'

"You will not, therefore, find perfection; but, having chosen a minister, receive him as from the Lord, and 'esteem him very highly in love for his works' sake.' Like Epaphras, 'labour fervently for him in your prayers, that he may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.' Pursue this course, and you will no longer say, 'I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas,' but, We are all of Christ."

The name of the successful candidate is not recorded; but the legend states that Paul's advice was followed, and that the church became eminently prosperous.

"And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Narratives, Anecdotes, &c.

WINNING A SOUL.

The following anecdote is related of the late Mr. George Hitchcock, the eminent merchant in St. Paul's Churchyard. Mr. Hitchcock was, as is well known, engaged in an extensive and profitable business in London, in which he employed many young men at liberal salaries. Having thus a good deal of patronage to bestow, and being otherwise a person of much influence, he was often interrupted by applications for favours, which sometimes tried his patience, although naturally of a kind and obliging disposition. A zealous missionary who laboured amongst the poor in the district in which Mr. Hitchcock carried on his business, often heard his wealth and influence spoken of; but always with a sad feeling in his own breast as to what would become of the rich man's soul. At last it seemed to him one night as if he heard a voice saying to him, "Go and read the Bible to Mr. Hitchcock." Sensible, however, of the difficulties which would stand in the way of obtaining access for such a purpose, he tried to banish the thought. Again he seemed to hear a similar voice speaking to him, and conscience told him that he was neglecting to attend to it, for fear of the cross he might have to bear; so, after much prayer, but with trembling faith, he one day entered Mr. Hitchcock's office, and requested to see him. He had to wait several hours and then retire unsuccessful, on account of Mr. Hitchcock's being much engaged; but next day he returned, when one of the clerks asked what was the nature of his business. He replied unhesitatingly that he wished to read the Bible to Mr. Hitchcock. The clerk fancied he must be out of his mind to come there on such an errand, and laughingly told the other clerks of the foolish object the man had come about. All that day and the next did the anxious missionary wait, expecting the way to be made plain whereby he might attain his object. On the morning of the fourth day, a young clerk felt pity for him, and, having occasion to carry some papers into Mr. Hitchcock's room, he mentioned that a man had been waiting four days to see him. Mr. Hitchcock at that moment was sorely tried by something that had gone wrong, but bid the clerk send the man in. "Well, what do you want of me?" he asked in rather an impatient tone. "I wish to read the Bible to you, that your soul may be saved." "Go away—you must be mad to think of such a thing at a time like this," was the reply. Still the missionary stood still, and did not seem inclined to move, upon which Mr. Hitchcock indignantly rose up, and pushed him out of the door. There was a slight declivity, which the poor man did not observe, and he missed his footing and fell into the outer office. Mr. Hitchcock immediately shut his door; whilst the missionary, sadly cast down with the reception, departed amidst the smiles of the young men, who had witnessed

what had passed. But now it was the Lord's time to take the part of his servant, and cause his heart to rejoice at the very moment that all his hopes seemed to be laid prostrate. Conscience began to work very powerfully with the merchant, and the following thought pressed itself upon him:—"Here am I continually beset with people asking me for favours, and trying to get all they can from me, and I treat them civilly; whilst towards this poor missionary, who came to bestow on me what he considers the greatest treasure on earth, I have acted with rude and uncalled-for violence." Quickly he opened the door of his room, and called out, "Bring that man back." One of the clerks ran after the missionary into the street, and bade him return. On again entering the office, Mr. Hitchcock said to him that he was sorry he had so treated him, and asked him what it was he wanted of him. "I wish you to let me read the Bible to you, that your soul may be saved." "And how much time will satisfy you;—will an hour every morning do?" "Oh, yes," exclaimed the delighted servant of God. And an hour he did appropriate for this purpose, until at length the Holy Spirit applied the blessed Word to the merchant's heart, and led him to find Salvation through faith in the blood of Jesus. Here was the light shining as that of a candle, forcing itself on one unwilling to receive it, but blessed to the saving of an immortal soul.—Mr. Hitchcock died last year, honoured and beloved for his devotedness and usefulness in God's cause.

"GENTLE JESUS."

It is not generally known that this beautifully simple hymn, which has been uttered by so many thousands of infant lips, is from the pen of the Rev. Charles Wesley. It was originally published as the first of six "Hymns for Children" in "Hymns and Sacred Poems," by John and Charles Wesley, in 1742. It was afterwards published in a small tract of "Hymns and Prayers for Children," containing nine hymns, five prayers, and two graces; and again in Charles Wesley's "Hymns for Children," 1763, the last edition of which was published in 1772, and is still in print. The following is a copy of the hymn in full:—

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity;
Suffer me to come to Thee.

"Fain I would to Thee be brought,—
Dearest God, forbid it not;
Give me, dearest God, a place
In the kingdom of Thy grace.

"Put Thy hands upon my head;
Let me in Thy arms be stayed;
Let me lean upon Thy breast;
Lull me, lull me, Lord, to rest.

"Hold me fast in Thy embrace;
Let me see Thy smiling face;
Give me, Lord, Thy blessing give;
Pray for me and I shall live.

"I shall live the simple life,
Free from sin's uneasy strife;
Sweetly ignorant of ill;
Innocent and happy still.

"O that I may never know
What the wicked people do;
Sin is contrary to Thee;
Sin is the forbidden tree.

"Keep me from the great offence,
Guard my helpless innocence;
Hide me from all evil, hide,
Self, and stubbornness, and pride.

"Lamb of God, I look to Thee;
Thou shalt my example be;
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild;
Thou art like a little child.

"Fain I would be as Thou art;
Give me Thy obedient heart;
Thou art pitiful and kind;
Let me have Thy loving mind.

"Meek and lowly may I be;
Thou art all humility;
Let me to my betters bow,
Subject to Thy parents Thou.

"Let me above all fulfil
God my Heavenly Father's will;
Never His good Spirit grieve;
Only to His glory live.

"Thou didst live to God alone;
Thou didst never seek Thine own;
Thou Thyself didst never please;
God was all Thy happiness.

"Loving Jesus, Gentle Lamb,
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art;
Live Thyself within my heart.

"I shall then show forth Thy praise,
Serve Thee all my happy days;
Then the world shall always see
Christ the Holy Child in me."

"CONTINUING INSTANT IN PRAYER."

In one of the rough parts of Oxford county, thirty years ago, lived five or six members of a Baptist church, whose place of worship was five miles away. Those few were widely scattered, and often found it difficult to sustain regular prayer-meetings. When the travelling was good in winter or summer, they could all attend; but when the snow melted in spring, or the frosts in autumn made the roads rough and difficult, the meetings were discontinued. In the year 1836, two male members were conversing upon the state of affairs, and proposed to meet each other for prayer every Sabbath evening. They lived nearly two miles apart, with no brethren intervening; but they clasped hands over the agreement, and determined to abide by it. They were faithful to their promise, and severe indeed was the storm that hindered them from coming together at the appointed time. Sometimes they met in private houses, sometimes in a small school-house. A few sisters usually attended, and neighbours occasionally dropped in; but they were often nearly alone. *The prospect* was discouraging; but see *the results*. These two brethren are yet living, and now meet for public worship in a pleasant chapel erected near the site of the old school-house. They have seen many revivals of God's work, and many friends and neighbours added to the little praying band. One of them has, at different times, seen eight sons and daughters make a public profession of their faith. Many have been converted and gone to help in other places, and some have died in faith and entered into rest. A church of nearly fifty members, united and prosperous, is now labouring zealously for the building up of Zion. Should these two brethren be questioned, they would say they had seen many gloomy discouraging days; many seasons when faith had almost failed; many times when it seemed as though God had almost forgotten his promises to his people. They would tell of spiritual trials and declensions, and of straits, poverty, and persecutions; but they would end by saying, "Out of them all the Lord delivered us."—*Zion's Advocate (U.S.A.).*

"NONE OTHER NAME."

A few persons were collected round a blind man who had taken his station on a bridge over a London canal, and was reading from an embossed Bible. Receiving from the passers-by of their carnal things, he was ministering to them spiritual things. A gentleman on his way home from the city was led, from curiosity, to the outskirts of the crowd. Just then the poor man, who was reading in the fourth chapter of the Acts, lost his place, and, while trying to find it with his fingers, kept repeating the last clause he had read—"None other name—none other name—none other name." Some of the people smiled at the blind man's embarrassment, but the gentleman went away deeply musing. He had lately become convinced that he was a sinner, and had been trying in many ways to obtain peace of mind. But religious exercises, good resolutions, altered habits, all were ineffectual to relieve his conscience of its load, and enable him to rejoice in God. The words he had heard from the blind man, however, rang their solemn music in his soul, "None other name." When he reached his home and retired to rest, the words, like evening chimes from village towers nestling among the trees, were still heard—"*None other name—none other name—none other name.*" And when he awoke, in more joyful measure, like matin bells saluting the morn, the strain continued—"*None other name—none other name.*" The music entered his soul, and he awoke to a new life. "I see it all! I see it all! I have been trying to be saved by my own works, my repentance, my prayers, my reformation. I see my mistake. It is Jesus who alone can save me. To him I will look. 'Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is none other name—none other name—none other name given among men whereby we must be saved.'"

THE MISSIONARY HYMN.

The late Rev. Dr. Raffles gives the following account of the origin of the Missionary Hymn ("From Greenland's Icy Mountains"), which is now sung the world over. Heber, then rector of Hodnet, married the daughter of Dean Shipley, rector or vicar of Wrexham, in

North Wales. On a certain Saturday he came to the house of his father-in-law, who resided at the rectory or vicarage, to remain over Sunday, and preach in the morning the first sermon ever preached in that church for the Church Missionary Society. As they sat conversing after dinner in the evening, the Dean said to Heber, "Now, as you are a poet, suppose you write a hymn for the service to-morrow morning." Immediately Heber took pen, ink, and paper, and wrote that hymn which, had he written nothing else, would have immortalized him. He read it to the Dean, and said, "Will that do?" "Aye," he replied, "and we will have it printed and distributed in the pews, that the people may sing it after the sermon." "But," said Heber, "to what tune will it go?" "Oh!" he added, "it will go to 'Twas when the seas were roaring.'" And so he wrote in the corner, at the top of the page, "'Twas when the seas were roaring." The hymn was printed accordingly.

A Page for the Young.

THE NEW YEAR'S PRAYER.

A HINT FOR THE FIRST OF JANUARY.

It was yet early, on a bright first of January, when Mr. Sanderson drew aside the curtain of his children's bedroom window, and awoke two of the rosiest sleepers in the world by a series of gentle shakes and droll reproaches.

"Come, boys, boys!—all the early worms have been up for the last half-hour, and are caught by this time! Wake up, will you?"

"Oh, father," said Bob, awaking, "is that you?"

Mr. Sanderson laughed. "Don't you know me?" he asked, as the boy stared, almost vacantly.

"Yes; but I am so—so sleepy!"

"You are always that in the morning," said Mr. Sanderson. "I wish I could say the same of you *at night*. But get up, now, will you? It's your mother's birthday—New Year's morning."

As these words met his ear, Robert Sanderson gave a great start, put his feet out of bed, and began to pull on his boots. It was evident that "mother's birthday" was a great event; and well it might be, for "mother" was a woman of ten thousand. Kindly, earnest-hearted, truly religious, heartily devoted to her husband and her children, Mrs. Sanderson deserved and obtained the respect of all who knew her. Her birthday, coming on the first day of January, was always a time of rejoicing for the boys, who were accustomed to save up their pocket-money in order to make her a little present on the occasion; and to-day Robert was to offer a little book which she had once admired as it lay in a shop-window at the entrance to the nearest market-town; a book containing a choice selection of hymns, and, as the bookseller's apprentice said, "handsomely bound in morocco, *gilt!*"

Morocco, *gilt!* How those words had been ringing in Bob's poor little head ever since he first heard them. At last, then, he was to give a really handsome present to his mother. Morocco, gilt!

"Eh!" said his father, as the boy muttered the magic words; "did you speak to me?"

"No, father."

"Oh, I thought you did. Do you mean to give up wearing stockings?"

Robert looked down at his feet, and smiled. He had put on his boots without anything under them, and now, of course, they must come off again.

"That is what *I* call wasting time," said Mr. Sanderson; but *he* smiled, too.

Meanwhile another pair of rosy cheeks was raised from the pillow, and another pair of feet touched the floor. It was an unusual thing for Mr. Sanderson's boys to rise early, even on the morning of a new year, and they both yawned pretty much while they were dressing; but by the time they were seated at the breakfast-table, they were as wide awake as possible. By this time Mrs. Sanderson had received the presents, and was able to praise the little hymn-book,—"morocco, *gilt*," as Robert took care to remind her.

"It is very beautiful," she had said to him, more than once; "and I value it all the more because you rose so early to present it." And then followed a conversation about early rising.

"If it could only be a birthday every morning, mother," said little Richard, "we should always get up, then."

"It *is* always a birthday every morning," said Mrs. Sanderson; "that is, *somebody's* birthday."

"Oh, yes, but that can't be the same," interrupted Robert, who was, if anything, the lazier of the two. "It must be *something that interests us* to make us get up."

Mrs. Sanderson looked at him gravely. "Has your *duty* no interest, my dear boy!" she asked, almost sadly, for this sluggard's habit was the bane of her son's existence. "Have your father's commands, and my entreaties, *no interest?*"

Robert made no reply, but, after worship, and as soon as his father and Richard left the room, he threw both his arms around his mother's neck, and said: "I will try to do better."

"But you have promised that so often," replied his mother, "that I cannot expect any lasting good to come of it. But if, on this New Year's morning, you would pray for strength to conquer this, and every other bad habit, I could hope."

At these words, a great struggle took place in the mind of Robert Sanderson. He had *said prayers* before, but now he was asked to pray. Could he promise to do so? He hesitated, until his mother offered to begin with him at once. Then he knelt down beside her, and asked, first of all, for the pardon of his sins through Christ; next, for the aid of the Holy Ghost in fighting with his temptations.

"I am very idle," he added within himself, as his mother ceased, "and I shall never be a useful man if I give way to it. Lord help me, for Jesus' sake. I am only ten years old: Lord *do* help me;" and again he added softly, "for Jesus' sake!"

It was heard,—that soft-whispered prayer,—and, in the year so well begun, Robert Sanderson grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

My dear readers, if you desire to correct your faults in this New Year, let me entreat you to begin it like Robert Sanderson, with humility and prayer.

Our Sunday Schools.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS AS THEY ARE, AND AS THEY OUGHT TO BE.

The present working of the Sunday school system,—what it has accomplished and what it is now doing, is a subject of very great importance. It is scarcely possible to estimate the amount of real spiritual good effected by the quiet but earnest labours of the great host of self-denying men and women who, on each returning day of rest, devote a large portion of their time to the work of teaching the young the things pertaining to the "Gospel of the grace of God." It is not too much to say, that the great majority of converted persons in our congregations received their first impressions of religion in the Sunday school. Many successful ministers and missionaries of the Gospel can trace back the streams of their own religious life to the Sunday school as their spring; and it would be utterly in vain to attempt to determine the extent to which the morality and religion that may be found in the middle and lower classes of society owe their existence to the same benevolent and self-sacrificing agency. It is quite to be expected that those who have been thus far successful in doing great good, should desire a much larger sphere for their labours, and should regret that so large a portion of the young is not included in the ranks of Sunday school children.

This fact was made the subject of a special resolution at the last annual meeting of the Sunday School Union. In the report it was stated that "two-thirds of the youthful population of London are destitute of the advantages which Sunday school instruction has been found to yield," and the attention

of Christian churches was earnestly called to the subject, that something effectual might be done to remedy the evil. Now this statement may be quite accurate *statistically;* but the supposition that a large proportion of this number may be under other modes of religious instruction on the Lord's day, does not seem to have been taken into the account, though even if their number be great, there will still remain thousands quite destitute of any means of religious instruction.

This amount of spiritual destitution suggests the inquiry, "*Is the Sunday school system, as at present conducted, doing all that it can do and ought to do, in accordance with its avowed object?*"

That object is thus stated under the authority of the Sunday School Union. "The object of a Sunday school is not to teach the children to read—not to implant good habits—not to instruct them in the truths of Christianity, in hopes that they may be converted in after life. The Sunday school does effect all these, and much more; but useful as is the art of reading, valuable the formation of right habits, all-important the boon of a Christian education, *neither* is the object we would aim to attain. They are necessary adjuncts, the means to the end, and not the end itself, which is only arrived at by the conversion of the children's precious and immortal souls;" and again: "The design of Sunday schools is the conversion of the children."—*The Sunday School.* Prize Essay, by MRS. DAVIDS, 1845.

It necessarily follows from this, that the agency by which this object is to be attained should be of a kind likely to succeed; in other words, every Sunday school teacher should possess true piety of heart. If the main object of Sunday school teaching be—to show the children their sinfulness before God—to explain the nature of that moral disease from which they all suffer—to direct them to the only remedy which God has provided for that disease—who so fit for this work as those who have felt the plague of their own hearts—who have obtained healing for their own souls—and who, through faith in Christ, have personal peace with God, and personal friendship with Him? The dignity and sacredness of the work make this essential.

When we look at the working of the Sunday school system from this point of view, one or two things in that working strike us as being anomalous, if not serious defects. One is the presence of a great many children in the Sunday schools of the present day who ought not to be there. We mean by these, *the children of parents who are Christian men and women.* It frequently happens that the nucleus of a Sunday school is formed—and *intentionally* so—of the children of parents who are members of the church, and therefore, in the judgment of charity, Christians. Many of the middle class especially, who have families, send their children to the school, and at once and without much trouble a large number of children are collected, superintendent and teachers are appointed, and by the aid of *Notes on Scripture Lessons, Bible Class Magazines,* &c., the work of teaching proceeds, apparently in a right way, but frequently not with much success so far as the ultimate object of Sunday school teaching is concerned. Many of the children thus brought together are receiving instruction in the Sunday school which they ought to be receiving *at home* from their own parents.

It is a serious question and one that deserves serious consideration, whether one effect of the Sunday school system as at present managed, has not been the weakening of the sense of Christian parental responsibility. The children of Christian parents ought not to be dependent upon the labours of Sunday school teachers for that direct religious teaching which they should receive at home. It is much to be feared that too many parents overlook their own solemn responsibility, and delegate to others duties arising out of the fact of their being parents and Christians. Of how many or of how few can it be said, as it was said of Abraham, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord"!

The features of the following suppositious picture are drawn from life. M. and his wife are members of a Christian church—the parents of several children. He is engaged in trade, in which he has the occasional help of his wife and elder children. The duties of

each day do not leave much time for close family intercourse, especially of a religious or devotional character—all have to work hard. Sunday comes—breakfast is rather later than usual—the elder branches of the family take up some magazine or "Sunday book," all the more welcome if it contains some tales with a professed religious bias, but spiced pretty strongly with a novelistic flavour; the younger ones after a hasty meal hurry off to the Sunday school. In the afternoon and evening the father of the family is visiting the sick, or distributing tracts, or making laborious efforts at preaching at some village station. The evening comes—the younger children are soon off to bed, and the rest speedily follow. Surely this is not as it should be. No Christian parents are justified in leaving the religious training of their children to others; no employment can be more fitting for them on the Lord's day than to devote as much time as possible to the religious culture of their family. Such a course would endear to memory even the humble home of poverty; would cement more firmly the family compact, especially among those whose hard daily toil has a tendency to loosen it; and many a future struggle would be more bravely sustained by the remembrance of a father's and mother's simple teaching and earnest prayers.

If it be said that many Christian parents are unfitted by their own want of education to take this responsibility upon themselves, the reply is, that a Sunday school is not a college for imparting general knowledge—principally biblical, no doubt,—but a place where pious loving teachers seek prayerfully to win souls for Christ, and *that* all Christian parents should seek to do with regard to their own children.

The conclusion at which we arrive is this—that there is an uncalled for, and what ought to be an unnecessary expenditure of labour and energy in one direction, that would be more profitably employed in another. The children who need our help are those *whose parents are ungodly*. Let our pious and energetic teachers be freed from labour as regards all other children, that they may seek after *those*. Such children are the most promising objects for earnest careful attention on the part of Christian teachers. They are ground in fallow that has never been broken up—we have everything to do to it—we may select our own plans and mode of proceeding, assured that no one has been there before us except "the enemy who has sowed tares," and we are "not ignorant of his devices."

If conversion be the main object of Sunday school teaching, it follows of necessity that the children who should form the classes in our schools, ought to be children who are totally destitute of religious knowledge, and have no special opportunities for receiving religious instruction; the children of the drunkard and the profane—of the godless and the unconcerned—the Arabs of the city—the waifs of town life—the merely animal youth of our rural populations. In such classes there is a stratum of sentient and intelligent life that has not yet been thoroughly worked, but that if worked will yield a rich return. To do that should be the main object—as it would be if well done the glory—of the Sunday school system.

Such children must be *sought after*. They will not come with clean faces and neat clothing, accompanied by their mothers or elder brothers or sisters to ask that they may be received into the school. No! They will be found in the gutter, or lying about in the neighbourhood of some miserable hovel, or out bird's-nesting or orchard-robbing—unkempt, uncared for; they must be looked after, and gently led and persuaded by kind words and friendly looks and sympathizing actions. A strange soil to work upon, it may be said! Yes; but presenting just the features upon which HE would have looked with yearning compassion who said, "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

We have written with a just appreciation of the large amount of good which Sunday schools have effected, but we wish them to be more successful still. We wish the energies of those who labour in this work to be put forth in the most likely direction—to be economised and more judiciously employed; for we believe that there is an expenditure of labour now put forth in one direction that *ought* to be unnecessary, to the neglect of other quarters which imperatively require more attention than has yet been given them.

The best Sunday school is not that which has an imposing number of children—that has a large number of *respectable* children, or of "good" children—but that which contains the largest number of spiritual outcasts, the sweepings of society, the hard working men and women of the future—and those from whose ranks our gaols are filled, and against whom the law ever turns with an ominous frown. Let the energies of our godly teachers be economised for and put forth to this work. Let Christian parents take care of their own children, that those who *can* give their time to the Sunday school may be free to enter into Satan's special territories, and battle with him for his prey. It may and will demand an increase of self-denial, a heart warm with Christ-like compassion; but though the work will be hard and often disappointing, it will not be in vain; and the crown given at last to those who are "*faithful*" will not be shorn of any of its splendour, because it was the reward for loving service done to "*the least*" of the Saviour's brethren.

Our Societies.

THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

It is already known to the readers of this periodical that the Baptist Missionary Society is in the crisis of a great and serious difficulty. Having being without debt for several years, it found itself at the end of last March with a debt of nearly *Twelve Hundred Pounds;* and at the end of last October the solemn announcement was made, that, so far as it was then possible to judge, the debt, at the end of next March, would be *Eight Thousand Pounds.* This announcement must have come, to many of the friends of the Society, as a surprise; but the causes of the prospective deficiency are not difficult to ascertain. First and foremost,—during the past year the churches have had to contend with the Lancashire Distress. This not only caused a number of congregations to be unable to contribute as formerly, but it drew away contributions some of which would doubtless have gone into the missionary treasury. During the last year or two, likewise, the legacies and special donations—which in some years have formed a considerable proportion of the income—have fallen far below the usual amount. In recent years these sources of income had been considerably larger even than in previous years, and, in the hope that they would be continued, the committee had ventured upon a larger expenditure, in response to the loud calls which were made upon them. Instead of £6,000, however, as in the year ending March, 1862, the income from these extra sources was less than £2,000, in the year ending March, 1863; and, in the months which have elapsed since the last annual meeting, the falling off has been quite as great. These circumstances are amply sufficient to account for the deficiency which has been announced. The only question is, how it is to be *met*. That it *must* be met, every friend of the Society will be resolved. No one would wish that missionaries should be recalled, or that the efficiency of the Mission should be impaired. Special efforts must be made. Churches that now do nothing must be induced to join in the great work. Those who do something, but far less than they ought to do, must be roused to the responsibility that rests upon them. Even those who have hitherto done well, must ask themselves whether the emergency does not call them to do more. The Mission which was originated by Carey and Fuller, and which has been so long sustained by the prayers and efforts of the brethren, must not now, after more than seventy years, be abandoned, or become less successful.

The solemn fact, however, needs to be stated,—that, unless the income of the Society can be increased, missionaries must be withdrawn. India, China, Africa, are calling for men:—men are ready and willing to go:—if the de-

ficiency be not speedily met, and the permanent income of the Society increased, not only must the call be refused, but some now labouring in the field must be withdrawn. Are we prepared for this? Is this the course that the churches will force on the committee? The question is one for the churches alone,—with them must rest the decision, and upon them the responsibility.

We are glad to state that many brethren are doing what they can in this emergency. The churches in Yorkshire are doing nobly. In the west of England, and in other parts of the country, meetings for the consideration of the subject have been held. London seems likely to do its part. Already, we believe, the deficiency, which was estimated a few weeks since at *eight thousand pounds*, is hopefully estimated at little more than *six thousand*. Let but the churches do their duty, and, with the Divine blessing, this great trial of our faith will lead only to greater efforts, and greater success than ever.

It is stated above that special efforts are being made in various parts of the country to meet the present necessities of the Mission. The following information has reached us at the time we go to press. The Yorkshire churches, as is already known, took the lead in the work of helping the Mission. They held a meeting at Huddersfield, and appointed the Rev. T. Pottenger, as their secretary, to make a special canvass of the churches. In his last letter, dated December 10th, Mr. Pottenger says:—"Our committee met in Leeds yesterday. Answers have been received from most of the churches, and there is a general disposition to help the Mission. Contributions have been sent from several of the small and poor churches." After stating what arrangements were made for Horsforth, Lockwood, Bradford, Hebden Bridge, Halifax, Leeds, Farsley, Sheffield, and Huddersfield, Mr. Pottenger observes,—"The churches are very deficient in systematic efforts to collect small sums, and I am sure we have here a real mine unexplored." We are confident that this last remark applies very widely; and we hope Mr. Pottenger will endeavour to remedy this defect in the north, and that the hint he throws out will be taken by brethren elsewhere. But it is not in Yorkshire alone that the brethren are bestirring themselves. Mr. Wilshire writes from Penzance, that at the half-yearly meeting of the Cornish Association, the position of the Mission was considered, and resolutions passed to take measures to secure enlarged subscriptions. The executive of the Devon Association have issued a circular recommending a collection to be made in all the chapels on the second Lord's day in January, to aid in the liquidation of the debt, and that an attempt be made to raise the annual income. At a meeting of the Herts and Beds Fraternal Association, held at Leighton, December 1st, the Rev. T. Hands, of Luton, was cordially commended to the churches in the canvass he is prepared to make, in the hope that they will further his object to the full extent of their ability. Mr. Mursell, writing under date of December 1st, informs us that he will take an early opportunity of inviting the pastors and deacons of the Leicester churches to confer together on the best means of aiding the Mission in its present necessities. Mr. Newman, on December 3rd, expresses his intention to ask the brethren in the neighbourhood of Shortwood to meet for deliberation on the question of the Mission funds. Mr. Millard has desired the secretaries to forward to friends in Huntingdonshire, holding office in connexion with the Mission Union there, circulars containing the needed information, and soliciting their kind co-operation in the good work. Nottingham has followed the example of Yorkshire, and has engaged Mr. Pottenger to visit that neighbourhood, Mr. Edwards and Mr. Martin promising their most cordial support in his canvass. Mr. Phillips has been busily occupied in London, where several meetings have been held. Mr. Brock and his friends have taken the matter up with their usual heartiness; while the pastor and deacons of Camberwell have issued a circular appealing to their fellow-members on the subject. Bayswater and Regent's Park have already sent in handsome contributions.

The prosperous Burmese mission, sustained by our American brethren, is threatened, we are sorry to say, with serious evils. Dissensions have arisen

through the doctrinal innovations of Mrs. Mason, who with her husband has hitherto been a chief instrument in the remarkable work carried on amongst the Karens. These noveltiesare of a kind likely to endanger or obscure the truth; and as it is now stated that Dr. Mason has given them his sanction, and that they find supporters amongst the friends of Missions in America, the gravest results may follow. As regards the views of Mrs. Mason, a missionary writes:—"Within my old field of labour, and within my personal knowledge, she has propagated, with an unconquerable zeal, the following tenets, viz.:—That she has been favoured with direct and special revelation from Heaven; that by the aid of the Holy Spirit she has found among the heathen a part of the Bible which had been lost since the flood; that by God's special favour she has discovered our own sacred Scriptures among the Burmans, Karens, and Shans, in their dresses, boxes, pagodas, architecture, and language; that Guadama never taught idolatry any more than Moses did; that the Phonghee kyoungs are streams of the Word; that the Burmese image of a bird is Noah's Ark, and contains the ten commandments; that the Burmese kaghee is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with the Word; that names have a sacred meaning, and carry with them divine power; that the world is the true Bible, and every rock, leaf, or flower, is a chapter, verse, or word; that God took upon himself the form of a world; that the world is to be purified by fire, *i.e.*, the sword, after which the God language will be sounded out over the world; that first of all and above all, God has given to her the key to these mysteries, but that soon the other missionaries will get the light, and it will be preached and believed all over the world, and become the universal and only religion; and much more than I have space or disposition to mention." It is also asserted that "preacher after preacher among the Karens is set aside because of their opposition to Mrs. Mason, and others are told that all who oppose the Mamma will be removed." By the last accounts, a council of missionaries was about to assemble at Toungoo. How far the native churches are infected with the heresy does not yet appear.

THE BAPTIST IRISH SOCIETY.

A VERY interesting meeting, in connection with the jubilee of the formation of the Baptist Irish Society, was held in Kingsgate Chapel, London, on Monday evening, December 7th. A considerable number of persons sat down to tea in the school-room. After tea, the Rev. J. Hoby, D.D., took the chair; and, after prayer by the Rev. R. Bayne, addresses were delivered by the chairman, the Revs. S. Green, F. Trestrail, W. Miall, C. Room, C. J. Middleditch, J. S. Stanion, and by Thomas Pewtress and William Heaton, Esqrs. The Rev. F. Wills read an interesting paper, from which we take the following extracts:—

"In examining the historical records of Eagle Street church, which, by this new erection, is now called Kingsgate, we found the minutes of the formation of the Baptist Irish Society, under date of December 6, 1813.

"The church, having had its attention drawn to this fact by the pastor, resolved to celebrate the jubilee of this event, and at the same time to do honour to the memory of its former esteemed and devoted pastor, the Rev. Joseph Ivimey, through whose instrumentality, partly, the Society was originated, and who continued to fill the office of secretary from its formation until nearly the close of his life, in 1834.

"In the year 1813, the Revs. J. Saffery, of Salisbury, and G. Barclay, of Kilwinning, visited Ireland, and spent some six weeks there, in collecting for the Baptist Missionary Society. The impression they received from beholding the religious and moral condition of the people, led them to doubt the propriety of bringing away money for propagating the Gospel in India from a country which was itself in circumstances but little superior, and in some parts not at all. Communications were made to the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, also to the meeting of Baptist ministers in London and its vicinity who assembled weekly for conference at the Jamaica Coffee-house, Cornhill, as to the propriety of forming a separate society for propagating the Gospel in Ireland. A correspondence was opened between several ministerial brethren and the Rev. Joseph Ivimey, including the Revs. John Saffery, Andrew Fuller, John Sutcliff, and Dr. Ryland; and, at the suggestion of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society agreed to vote twenty guineas towards the commencement of the new Society.

"Encouraged by the forementioned facts, the Rev. Joseph Ivimey prepared a circular, which was addressed to all the Baptist ministers in London and its vicinity, requesting them to attend, and bring their friends with them to Eagle Street meeting-

house, at six o'clock in the evening of the 6th December, 1813.

"A public meeting was held at the New London Tavern, on Tuesday, the 19th of April, 1814. Joseph Butterworth, Esq., M.P., occupied the chair. At that meeting the sum of £120 was contributed to the funds of the Society, including twenty guineas voted by the committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, and five guineas from the Rev. Andrew Fuller,—a sum far beyond the £13 2s. 6d. with which the Baptist Missionary Society commenced its Indian missionary enterprise."

In the report presented at the late annual meeting of the Society, it was stated that "the year 1864 will be the jubilee of the Baptist Irish Society. The memory of devoted and distinguished men, who were zealously devoted to the work in its earliest days, may well rekindle the ardour of those on whom the responsibility of continuing that work now devolves. The names of Fuller, Saffery, Christopher Anderson, Ivimey, and many others, may well stimulate the efforts of British Christians to give far greater power to efforts long made in behalf of Ireland, still wrapped in spiritual darkness and Popish superstition. The committee would respectfully but most earnestly entreat the generous aid of Christian friends to augment the income of the Society at least £500 per annum. This would enable them greatly to increase the number of agents employed, since the whole amount could be devoted to that purpose, without any additional charge for the management of the Society's affairs. This proposal is, therefore, submitted to the Christian public with the earnest hope that it will be accomplished."

We trust that this proposal of the committee will meet with a hearty response. The history of the fifty years now nearly gone, is such as to encourage the Christian public of Great Britain to put forth far greater efforts in behalf of Ireland. The difficulties attending an evangelical Mission in a country so intensely Popish, are such that it was not to be expected success would be continuous and uniform. But when we consider the social, moral, and religious results which have been secured, we feel that the Mission has been so blessed of God that it may well be sustained with enlarged benevolence and zeal. The plans of the committee, at the present time, are carefully and wisely laid, and vigorously carried out. The *auxiliary* nature of the missionary enterprise is rightly kept before them. Hence their efforts to establish churches in places where the population warrants the expectation that they will ultimately be able to support themselves, and become the means of still wider evangelical effort. We rejoice to learn that the Society has stations in Dublin, Belfast, Coleraine, Ballymena, Banbridge, Portadown, Athlone, and Waterford, while many smaller towns, and nearly one hundred subordinate stations, are also occupied by its agents. Several thousands of the Irish people regularly listen to the Gospel as proclaimed by these brethren. In the years 1860–2, no less than 363 members were gathered together in church-fellowship, and that does not include the year of the Revival. In the years 1861–2, 94 members were added to ten of the churches belonging to the Society, besides upwards of 50 persons gathered together at a station very recently adopted. Four additional stations have been entered on within the last four months, and three additional agents, natives of Ireland, have been appointed within the same time. Two missionary brethren, occupying stations in Ceylon and China, were first united in Christian fellowship with a church not long since originated by the Society. Several young men, well fitted for usefulness, would gladly devote themselves to evangelical labour amongst their countrymen, and the committee would gladly aid them in preparation for such a work. We trust that the consideration of these facts will secure for the Society a very enlarged amount of pecuniary support, and of earnest, believing prayer, that it may be able, during its jubilee year, very greatly to increase its operations in the arduous but important and interesting field of missionary labour that Ireland supplies.

THE BAPTIST BUILDING FUND.

Amongst the various societies connected with the Baptist denomination, there is perhaps none which has been pursuing its way more quietly, but with increasing strength from year to year, than the Baptist Building Fund,—it has been doing good by stealth, almost. Originating in 1824,—to prevent, as the